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*The International Crisis : The  
Theory of the State*



Stockton, Calif.

# *The International Crisis: The Theory of the State*

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## LECTURES

DELIVERED IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1916

BY

LOUISE CREIGHTON

W. R. SORLEY

J. S. MACKENZIE

A. D. LINDSAY

H. RASHDALL

HILDA D. OAKELEY

UNDER THE SCHEME FOR IMPERIAL STUDIES IN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

AT

BEDFORD COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

WITH AN OPENING ADDRESS BY  
VISCOUNT BRYCE

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CONTENTS  
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	PAGE
VISCOUNT BRYCE, O.M., P.C.	
OPENING ADDRESS . . . . .	I
MRS. CREIGHTON	
I. CHURCH AND STATE . . . . .	9
PROFESSOR W. R. SORLEY, Litt.D., LL.D., F.B.A.	
II. THE STATE AND MORALITY . . . . .	25
PROFESSOR J. S. MACKENZIE, Litt.D., LL.D.	
III. MIGHT AND RIGHT . . . . .	56
A. D. LINDSAY, M.A.	
IV. THE STATE AND SOCIETY . . . . .	92
CANON H. RASHDALL, Litt.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.B.A.	
V. EGOISM, PERSONAL AND NATIONAL . . . . .	109
HILDA D. OAKELEY, M.A.	
VI. THE IDEA OF A GENERAL WILL . . . . .	138



## LORD BRYCE'S OPENING ADDRESS

### THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS: THE THEORY OF THE STATE

THERE is an old maxim which says that it is the part of the wise to draw good out of that which is evil. The calamity of the present war has impressed upon the people of this country the duty of trying to know more and to reflect more than they have hitherto known and reflected upon their relations with other countries. Our Government is often charged with having been insufficiently informed. But how much more truly may that be said of Parliament and of the nation as a whole. And now we are brought face to face with many difficult problems which comparatively few persons have ever considered, problems of immense significance to our future peace and welfare. We find on all sides an agreement that the British people as a whole have been so much occupied with their domestic politics as not to have followed and understood the great international issues which have now come to a head, and thus there has come a demand for some plan to be devised whereby a popular control of foreign policy should be exercised. How this can be accomplished is still far from clear. But meantime it is evidently desirable that knowledge at least should be increased, and that the nature and scope of our international relations and

the part which we, as a nation, are called upon to play in the politics of the world, should engage in far larger measure than heretofore the attention both of Parliament and of the citizens generally.

Thus there are two things to be done. The one is to lead and help our people to know better the facts of the European situation as it stands to-day, including the wishes and aspirations of the various nationalities and the conditions upon which any durable peace must be based, a task to which such organizations as the Council for the Study of International Relations are addressing themselves. The other is to examine, and help the people to examine and comprehend, the theories and doctrines which have been influencing the mind of the nations of continental Europe. It is to this latter task that the present course of Lectures is directed ; and the six subjects to be treated in these Lectures cover the most important part of that field.

This war has shaken the foundations of the world of thought as well as of the world of action. In the last eighteen months we have learned how formidable a theory of the State, which we in Britain have never held and which we deem erroneous, may become. It is, more than anything else, the German theory of the State—the doctrine of the omnipotence of the State, of its right to absorb and override the individual, to prevail against morality, indeed practically to deny the existence of international morality where State power is concerned,—it is this deadly theory which is at the bottom of the German aggression. As



we are fully determined to resist that aggression, so we ought to conduct, both here and abroad, an intellectual war against that theory. And in order to destroy it we must begin by understanding it, and by having a sound and coherent theory of our own.

The subject to be considered to-night deals with the relation of the State, as being the nation organized for civil or secular purposes, to the Church or Churches, i. e. to the citizens as grouped into one or more Christian bodies organized for religious purposes, or for those beneficent forms of social work which find their motive power in religious feeling. The nature of the relation between State and Church has been from the early days of Christianity itself, one of the fundamental questions with which civil rulers and ecclesiastical authorities have had to deal. At some periods in Christian history it has given rise to acute controversies and even to long and bitter wars. You all remember the tremendous strife of the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which distracted most of the European nations. The conflict between William Rufus and St. Anselm, that between Henry II and Thomas of Canterbury, and that between the Emperors and the Popes from the time of Henry IV and Gregory VII onwards, are the most familiar instances. At this moment I will touch on one only of the many questions that are still far from being settled, and some of which will probably be referred to in the Lecture of to-night and in those that are to follow. It is this: What can Christian Churches, as the depositaries and the exponents

of the principles of the Gospel, do to enlighten the State and to guide its action ? The Roman Church in the Middle Ages claimed the right to do this, and often did it, by the exercise of what may be called spiritual compulsion, and in particular by the once powerful weapon of excommunication. Nowadays it is generally agreed, at least among Protestants, that ecclesiastical organizations can act only by influencing the minds and consciences of the citizens who are their members, so that these citizens, as voters and as holders of any office, should try to use their civic rights and perform their civic duties in accordance with the teachings of the Church.

Such influence as a Church can thus exert will be of the same nature whether or no it is officially recognized by the State. That which we call an 'Established Church' need not possess any greater influence for such a purpose than one altogether unconnected with the State, such as is the Roman Catholic Church in France, and such as are the many Churches in the United States ; and the duty cast on it to expound Christian principles and to secure their application in civil affairs will be equally clear in both cases.

This duty becomes peculiarly important in war-time, because such a time subjects Christian principles to an unusually severe strain. Passion flames up. Revenge seems to be no more than justice. The maxim that the safety of the nation is the highest law has been, by the German Government, stretched to excuse breaches of faith or to

justify cruelties conducive to success ; and the supreme importance of the cause is used to cover the wickedness of the means. At such a time, therefore, if ever, both the Churches and those who have drawn from the study of history and philosophy precepts for the guidance of life are bound to have an opinion and to deliver a judgement on the proper attitude of State and Nation.

Examples are before us now. We hear some few voices raised to demand that the same war methods which our enemies have been using against non-combatants should be used by our troops against the non-combatants of enemy countries. Because bombs have been dropped on our villages and unfortified towns, killing innocent persons, women and children as well as men, we are—so it is suggested—to do the like to the innocent villagers of Germany in the hope that such reprisals may lead the enemy Government to desist from its breaches of the usages of war.

It is a vain hope, for every cruelty tends to call forth another, and in a competition of cruelty the Government against which we are now fighting would always win. There is no reason to think that any recourse to inhuman practices, shocking to philosophy and morality, such as the enemy has adopted, would have the slightest effect on him or promote in any way our military success. We should not gain : indeed, we should certainly lose, because there is nothing that has more won for us the approval of all that is best in neutral



nations than that we have championed the cause of justice and humanity. That is what nerves our arm, and has created in Britain and among our British brethren beyond the seas, a unity never paralleled in any previous crisis of our history. But apart from this, it must be remembered that we stand in this war for justice and right. We stand for the interests of mankind as a whole. We acknowledge a moral law ; and we acknowledge it as a State no less than as individuals. From that position we must never depart.

A few voices are also raised suggesting a policy of implacable and unending hostility to the subjects of the enemy country. Even after the war of arms has ceased we are—so it is proposed—to begin a new war of trade intended to prevent them from ever recovering prosperity. It is an unwise proposal, pre-doomed by economic laws to failure, but before its failure has been demonstrated we should have severely suffered ourselves, not only by the prolongation of a spirit of enmity which would threaten a renewal of hostilities, but also by the destruction of a commercial intercourse which has benefited ourselves quite as much as those who though now our enemies will hereafter be legally at peace with this country and may themselves condemn and reverse the policy their rulers have forced upon them. These, however, are economic questions ; and it is only those of a moral nature that fall within the compass of the subject we are to hear discussed to-day. Here the teachings



of history and those of religion are clear. History warns us that anger is a dangerous counsellor. It tells us that racial hatreds have been infinitely mischievous to the peace and progress of the world. They have been the fruitful parents of misunderstanding, prejudice, and strife. Religion condemns them as pernicious to the character of those who indulge them. There are no darker pages in the annals of mankind than those which record the cruelties such hatreds have prompted.

Christianity does not forbid moral indignation against those who commit atrocious acts. We are permitted—indeed we are bound—to detest a noxious system of doctrines, and to fight against a Government that breaks faith and perpetrates cruelties, bound to fight against it, as the Greeks said, ‘not only with swords but also with axes,’ till its aggressive power for evil has been destroyed. But Christianity forbids hatred against individual men as members of a race or nation, for such hatred would harm the soul and perpetuate the very evils we seek to root out. It is not thus that our feet are to be guided into the way of peace.

The moralists and publicists of Greek and Roman antiquity were never tired of examining the questions that arise where honour and justice may seem in the conduct of State affairs to conflict with what is called expediency. In most of the critical cases they considered, and in most of those that have arisen since, the result showed that the course prescribed by justice was, or would probably

have turned out to be, the course of expediency also. Be that as it may, the duty of the Christian Church is surely clear. She is a guardian of honour and right. The law of her own being requires her to set forth the fundamental principles for and by which she exists, trying to suggest their application in a reasonable and temperate spirit to the problems of the moment. There will always be difficulties in the application of these principles, but there ought to be none as to the principles themselves, nor as to her right and her duty to see that they receive full consideration.

In a free country, every citizen is responsible, according to the measure of his power, for the action of his Government, and is bound to do what he can to see that it obeys those rules of justice and humanity which the Gospel delivers as universal rules, to be observed and practised in every relation of life, public as well as private.

Although we, like other nations, have at times done things it is hard to justify, we have never accepted the fatal doctrine that the State is above morality. We have never denied that we are citizens of the world as well as of our own country, or repudiated the obligation which each nation owes to mankind as a whole. It was the Christian Church which first taught that all men were brothers because they were all the children of one Father in heaven. The brotherhood of mankind would perish along with morality if the Law of Force and Force only were to be recognized as governing the relations to one another of the peoples.

# I

## CHURCH AND STATE

BY LOUISE CREIGHTON

PASCAL has said with truth that before beginning a discussion we ought to define our terms. I do not want to spend time in considering the nature and functions of the State; that will be treated of in later lectures. It has been defined in various ways: as the organism by which a community frames and enforces the rules of its social life; and, again, it is said to be the community organized for securing the most commodious arrangement of our common life; the necessary organ of the nation for the arrangement of the common life; the executor of the nation's wishes, the exponent not the educator of the national will. By the Church many different things are meant in accordance with the views of the speaker or the occasion on which he speaks. On the present occasion I would like to say that, roughly speaking, I shall in this lecture mean by the Church, the visible organization which expresses the religious life of the nation, and by the State, the organization of the nation for secular purposes.

It must always be remembered that behind both Church and State stands the nation; and



again that no nation can exist in isolation, for each nation is one of the great family of nations, and behind it stands humanity. Still less can the Church be isolated. The national Church is part of the whole Catholic Church, whether we choose to describe the Catholic Church as consisting of the whole body of baptized Christians, or whether we define it in the narrower sense of those who call themselves the Catholic party. The Church in each nation has responsibilities to the whole Church as well as relations with it. The State, too, is connected in an infinite number of ways with other states, and is dependent on them and responsible to them. Hence it is hard to isolate our problem to the case of an individual Church and an individual State.

In mediaeval times, when people saw visions and loved great ideas, they dreamt of a world-monarchy and a world-religion. They embodied their dreams in the ideal of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire. This ideal was unrealized from the first, since the Greek Church never wholly shared the western vision. The Empire had two capitals, one at Rome and one at Byzantium, and in the ninth century the two Churches finally separated. The ideal organization of the world which floated before the eyes of mediaeval dreamers was finally shattered by the development of the European nationalities, each of which at that stage of the world's history was engaged in realizing its existence in contest with others. The Catholic Church, officially at least,

ignored nationality, which often had to assert itself as it were in opposition to the Church, just as it had asserted itself in opposition to other nations.

The Church's position as a spiritual power among the nations was weakened by its desire for temporal power. It became an Italian state, one state amongst others, and suffered not only from a conflict of interests within itself, but also from the jealousies and contests arising from its relations with other states. The mediaeval ideal of Christendom as a great federation was never realized; it remained an ideal conception. It has been said that in mediaeval times men were much more concerned to have an ideal than they were interested to realize it. There were moments in the days of great Popes, like Gregory VII and Innocent III, when some approach was made towards realizing the mediaeval ideal, but the seeds of failure had been sown far back in the past, when the Papacy accepted an alliance with the world and determined to become a world-power. History seems to show that it was almost inevitable that the Church should become a world-power, a political power. It had to be organized even in apostolic days, for it could not exist without organization, and as Christianity spread the need for organization grew stronger. The Church attracted the men of the finest brains and the strongest convictions in the days when the Roman Empire was falling to pieces. It only grew stronger under persecution, till a clever politician like Constantine who succeeded the perse-

cuting Diocletian saw that he would gain more by patronizing than by persecuting it. There was no conviction of anything but political profit in Constantine's conversion, and there was no gain, but rather peril, to the spiritual life of the Church by its elevation to be a political power.

Amidst the crash of the Roman Empire, the Papacy, which kept its centre at Rome when the imperial centre was transferred to Constantinople, became, as it were, the inheritor of the traditions of the world-rule of Rome. Christendom felt its unity when the civil power was losing it. Gregory the Great, who, as head of the Church, was filled with missionary zeal to spread the teaching of the Church, was also turned to by the peoples as a leader in temporal affairs. The Church grew rich in worldly possessions and in the ownership of wide lands through the piety of its members ; and the responsibilities attached to its vast possessions tended to immerse it more and more in worldly affairs. At last the desire to strengthen the position of the Pope as the head of a united Christendom led, in 850, to the production of the forged decretals of Isidore. These, together with a number of decrees of past Councils all tending to increase the power of the bishops and of the Pope, contained the supposed donation of Constantine, which gave to the Roman see the supremacy over all the Churches of the earth.

These forgeries, which presented 'the ideal of the future as a fact of the past', showed what the churchmen of the time wished to make of the



Papacy. The desire for power and wealth had taken hold of them. They had not recognized, as Dante taught in the *De Monarchia*, that 'the power to direct a kingdom of mortal men is contrary to the nature of the Church; therefore it is not to be numbered among her powers'.

It was not only the seemingly inevitable growth of wealth and position that made the Church a world-power; the fact that it was the centre of the intellectual life of the time put under its control education, law, art, learning, and social life generally, at a time when to wage war was the chief function of the nobles and gentry. So it came about that the leading churchmen became absorbed in secular affairs. The vision of the Middle Ages seemed the only way to save the spiritual position of the Church, but the Church was in bondage to the love of power and could not realize that vision. The Empire failed as signally to realize its part of the vision. There resulted no effort to make a joint dominion a possibility, but a constant struggle for dominion between the Church and the Empire, which centred round the great struggle between Pope Gregory VII and the Emperor Henry IV. The essence of this struggle was the determination of Gregory VII to free the Church from the dominion of the world. In the struggles of those days we see the emergence of a new ideal, the ideal of modern times, first expressed in words by Cavour 'a free Church in a free State', an ideal which has not found its realization yet.

This ideal has been spoken of lately by some as a platitude. It is not easy to be quite certain what people mean by a platitude. I have heard it defined as 'a stale paradox'. If the ideal that we are speaking of is a platitude it must mean that it is a truth accepted by all but still left unrealized. It is itself probably not the final truth; it may be that what we need to aim at is a free State in a free Church.

We can trace in the history of England the steps by which this ideal grew up in the minds of men without their being aware of it. There too the Church was the first symbol of unity. There was one Church before there was one kingdom. The Church was organized by Theodore when the condition of the country was still chaotic. That it soon recognized that it was one of its duties to preserve the nation from evil rulers is shown by the lead taken by Dunstan in a political revolution. At the Norman conquest the English Church lost its specially national character and became merged in a larger conception of the Church, and as such shared in the great struggle of Gregory VII to make the Church independent of the civil power. The struggles of Anselm with William Rufus and of Becket with Henry II were struggles for the liberty of the Church. The claims that they made could not possibly be conceded by the State in their entirety. The ecclesiastical courts, the rights of the clergy as conceived by them, would have meant that the clergy ceased to be citizens.

But though they failed to secure all that they fought for, they preserved the independence of the Church in face of the aggressions of the Crown. They appeared to the minds of the people as the advocates of liberty.

Still more clearly did the Church stand forth as the champion of liberty under John and Henry III, when Archbishop Stephen Langton helped to lead the barons to win the Great Charter from the king at Runnymede, and when Bishop Grosseteste advocated the cause of Simon de Montfort as being the cause of God. Is it altogether fanciful to see in these contests of the thirteenth century the inarticulate beginning of the desire for a free Church in a free State?

The Church, however, failed to remain the leader of English liberty. Its growing wealth and greed alienated the sympathies of the people, and in the time of the Lollards we find the first movements for religious reform closely connected with the movements for social reform. To Langland and the Lollard preachers alike the proud churchman was as much a foe of the poor as the greedy landlord himself. In Tudor times the desire for gathering all power into his own hands made Henry VIII insist upon the complete subjection of the Church to his will, whilst in Edward VI's reign Northumberland treated the religious interests of the people as subordinate to the political interests of the Government. It was, however, under the Tudors that the idea of the Church as a national Church, an idea always



manifest in the successive efforts of the English Church and Government, to free themselves from the dominion of Rome, finally asserted itself. Henceforth the question of the relations between Church and State was to be fought out on English soil by the English people. That the Church was national involved no opposition to the idea of one Holy, Apostolic, Catholic Church; it meant no breach with the past. The real difficulty was that from the first the national Church did not embrace the whole nation. The desire to make it do so, the insistence upon the need for uniformity, which was mistaken for unity, led to an even closer alliance between the Church and the civil power. The belief in the divine right of kings, which the Stuarts cherished, identified the Church with the maintenance of the royal prerogative, and in the civil wars it was the Puritans, the opponents of the national Church, who were identified with the struggle for liberty. For a brief moment under James II the Church, in the persons of the seven bishops, rose again in defence of liberty, but the revolution which placed William and Mary on the throne, by creating the non-juring party definitely plunged the Church into the turmoil of party politics.

We need not follow the history of the English Church through its activity during the reign of Anne, nor through its dull and somnolent existence under the Hanoverian kings. During this period its possibility for independent action, or even for expression of opinion, was destroyed by the

unconstitutional suppression of Convocation in 1717. All control over its outward action was left in the hands of Parliament, and the clergy could not sit in Parliament and advocate the interests and needs of the Church. To the Latitudinarian Whigs the Church was a department of the State, and the Church to maintain its power and its position with regard to other religious bodies was glad to make much of its unity with the State, so as to keep out of power those who would not accept its tests. It became reactionary through its desire at least to keep what it had got, and gave its independence into the custody of the State. In consequence, at times of religious movement, the Church cannot decide for itself what changes and developments are lawful and desirable in its organization or its services, or in the nature and methods of its teaching, without the permission of Parliament, and in Parliament the majority may now not even be members of the National Church, still less really conversant with Church matters and needs. So we are confronted still with the problem how to realize the ideal, on which the existence of the Church as a visible, living society must depend, of a free Church in a free State.

It would be interesting to follow the history of the relations between Church and State in other countries, but that would carry us too far. I have followed it in outline in England because we can thus best see the problems involved. In England the Church at the time of the Reformation sur-

mounted the difficulty of harmonizing its relations with the State and its allegiance to an external power, the Papacy, by cutting the ties which bound it to the Papacy. But it allowed its life to be stifled by the desire for uniformity, and by trusting to the arm of the State to secure this desired uniformity lost its power to govern itself. From this comes the difficulty of the present position.

Some would meet this difficulty and gain independence for the Church by disestablishment. This solution would mean a far greater loss to the State than to the Church. Disestablishment would mean the repudiation of a Christian basis for the State; it would seem dangerously like an assertion that the State had nothing to do with religion, that the State was not holy. I am not here primarily concerned with a defence of the Establishment. It is at present full of anomalies which can only be understood in reference to its historical origin. The State did not choose a Church and establish it. The Church was neither founded, set up, nor moulded by the State. It was there before the State. Its position, its functions in connexion with the State had from time to time to be defined and legalized. As Stubbs puts it: 'The Church of England was established not by any single act of the State or nation, but by continuous recognition of her character and legal powers.' The phrase 'as by law established', which we find in legislation, was used in order to denote such necessary defi-



nitions of the position of the Church. When at the Reformation its national character was emphasized, its position as the branch of the Catholic Church established in England became clear, but the possibility of conflict between the two jurisdictions, Church and State, was not destroyed. The difficult questions remain—how far can the Church be independent of the State? what is its true relation to the State? It must have its own life, a life which must be expressed in its own way; but it cannot be treated as a body outside the State, because the members of the Church are also members of the State. Still the Church must not be identified with the State. As members of the Church men are organized for one purpose, as members of the State for another. Yet in one sense it may be said that the Church is outside the State, for as the individual should guide his temporal life and judge his actions by spiritual considerations, so the Church should act as the conscience of the State, ever maintaining the Christian standard and showing how it should regulate the conduct of the State.

It is of course difficult to see clearly the line between legitimate spiritual interference and political interference, but on the power to do this the possibility of avoiding serious contests between Church and State must depend. Unfortunately, the capacity of the Church to avoid these contests and to act as the national conscience is weakened by our unhappy religious divisions, but it would be weakened still more disastrously, if there were

no national Church to take the lead, to be the natural organ of the nation at times of crisis, or in the general ordering of the national life giving expression to the religious feeling of the nation. The power of the Church to be the conscience of the nation, to give the lead in spiritual matters, will be strengthened in proportion as it is content to confine itself to purely spiritual matters. The pursuit of world-power has been the curse of the Church all through the ages. There will always be possibilities of collision between Church and State. The State is concerned with expediency, the Church has to enunciate principles which are frequently threatened by expediency. The State requires the widest statement as to expediency; the Church has a deposit of principles which it is bound to preserve. But the Church will do much to avoid collision if it will be content to express itself as the spiritual organ of the nation, and will abstain from fighting for what it considers its rights.

The Church has been slow to give up the functions which belonged to it when the conscience of the nation was only partially awakened. Education, the care of the poor and sick, were all left to the Church in the past. Now the State, permeated by Christian ideas, has its conscience more awake and recognizes these as its duty. The Church must not be loath to give up these functions; its part is to see that the State keeps up a high ideal of duty. The fact that those men who care about the maintenance of the

Christian standard belong to a visible organization, the Church, will help them as members of the State to insist upon the maintenance of that standard. But if the Church is to be free, it must have the right to secure that its children have its teaching in the schools, its ministrations in hospitals and asylums, a right which it in its turn must freely accord to those with other convictions. All Christians are concerned in maintaining the religious character of the nation, all alike would lose by the nation being treated as being purely secular. The existence of a national Church emphasizes the religious character of the nation. But for the Church to be concerned in politics is fatal to its spiritual character. This has ever been the danger of the Church. To this day, in its fear of change, it is in the main allied to one political party; it is not truly democratic, it still clings to power.

I cannot here enter into details of Church reform, but I would insist that if the Church is to be really alive it must be free to develop in accordance with the needs of the time. As a part of the universal Church, it has the fundamental truths of Christianity in its keeping, but their expression in worship, their definition in terms which are in accordance with the thought of the times, their adaptation to meet the social needs of the day, these are the business of a living Church. At present the national Church cannot even change its prayer book without the permission of Parliament. It is without the



power of self-government. As a living body it needs to have its own councils, parochial, diocesan, provincial, on a truly democratic basis, in which its members as a whole may realize that they, and not the clergy only, are the Church, and that its affairs are theirs. But the Church no more than any other corporation can free itself entirely from the control of the State. It must seek the protection of the State for the preservation of its property, and the State is bound to see that the Church, as a corporation and as such a member of the State, holds its property in such a way as to hurt no other member of the State, or interfere with the reasonable liberty of action of any. The Church, on its side, like St. Francis, must be ready to lose all its property and be content with holy poverty rather than submit to an unrighteous State. But if the State is unrighteous, it can only be because the Church has failed in its duty as the conscience of the State. If the Church is free to grow and develop, and free therefore to meet the real needs and demands of the people, it will be able to speak with a voice which will command attention. Its special function must be kept clear ; its part is to be the witness to Christian truth, the conscience of the nation, the salt which keeps the nation from corruption. But it must know no party ; as a Church its business should not be to prescribe methods, but to give a spirit. Its members will not go into the clash of politics with a settled Church policy ; they will have as churchmen no

special axes to grind. The Church, as such, is not called upon to solve our social problems, but to give the spirit in which men must labour to solve them. It must be an advocate neither of labour nor capital, but of righteousness and justice.

It is often lamented that the Church has no clear message to give at moments of crises. May this not be because Church and nation alike mistake the kind of message which the Church can give? It can give a call to consider righteousness in the first place; it can bid the exponents of different opinions test their opinions by Christian standards, and exhort them to work together in a Christian spirit to find a way out of their difficulties, but to take a side as the Church with either party would be to sacrifice its unique position. Its individual members as members also of the State may rightly take sides with either party, but the spirit in which they advocate their views must be the spirit of Christ, that spirit which the Church exists to set forth and to maintain.

It is of course obvious that the influence of the Church is much weakened by the fact of its divisions. There are many other religious organizations besides the national Church which are part of the broken body of the Church of Christ. Energy is again and again weakened by religious controversies, by repeated struggles for power and mastery. But there are some hopeful signs. The different religious organizations are learning how to co-operate in more and more directions

without loss of principle. It may be that as all alike increasingly try as members of the State to make the Christian standard prevail in every department of life, they may at last find that unity which has been sought in vain along other paths.

In the months that have passed since the cloud of war burst upon us many have asked in vain for a certain voice from the Church, may we not say from Christendom as a whole? It is right that the Church should inspire the nation, but its call must be its own. Its members may be convinced that a war is righteous, but the business of the Church is to inspire the nation to fight righteously, not to act as a recruiting sergeant. Its business is to learn and teach the spiritual lessons of the war; to call to penitence; to keep love, even the love of our enemies, alive; to diminish the inevitable suffering; to prepare for a better future in which peace and goodwill may prevail; to strengthen and build up the nation in righteousness. Has any organized Church in Christendom done this? If there should be failure here a tremendous opportunity will have been missed. Let us not blame others for what they may have left undone, but let us remember that we are the Church, to whatever Christian body we may belong, and that the responsibility is with us.



## II

# THE STATE AND MORALITY

BY W. R. SORLEY

THE great war has led to our seeing many things in a clearer light than we did before ; and among these things are the divergent ideals of national life represented by the hostile powers. We know that what is going on is not merely a struggle between rival armies : we are engaged in a conflict of ideas. Our enemies have one set of ideas as to what is of greatest value in life, and they are determined that their ideas shall prevail : they have no doubt about the excellence of these ideas, and there can be no question about their devotion to them. We have quite a different set of ideas : we value things of which they take little account, and we do not set much store by that special variety of civilization—called by them their *Kultur*—which they seek to impose upon the world. We also are determined to maintain our own ideas, and the mode of life which expresses them, and we are willing to fight in their defence.

But fighting is an affair of force. And when it comes—as it has come—to fighting, the victory does not necessarily lie with the higher set of ideas or with the nobler scheme of life ; but on the other hand, success is apt to attend the set

of ideas that can be most readily and effectively translated into force. Of this truth we are all painfully conscious at the present moment. It gives the enemy a great and obvious advantage ; and we explain that advantage by referring to his centralized organization and to his autocratic government. Our explanation is right so far. But these things in their turn rest upon certain characteristics in the mind of the people which lead them instinctively to believe what the government tells them, to obey its behests, and to act as one man in their country's cause. 'Theirs not to reason why.' It must be admitted that these characteristics are not displayed in this country to anything like the same extent. There is equal enthusiasm and there is equal determination, but the powers of the country do not all fall into place in the same orderly way : we are more inclined to object, criticize, discuss—especially to discuss—so that time is lost and energy is frittered away. As in the days of the Judges, every man does that which is right in his own eyes. He is only slowly coming to understand that, in this matter, his safety lies in seeing with the eyes of the State and throwing all his energy into the work which the State gives him to do.

Thus it comes about that the way in which a people regard the State to which they belong is of fundamental importance in times of national trial. The feeling that no man is his own but that all are members of one body—the State—makes it possible to organize all the forces of the

people for a common object under a directing mind. On the other hand, if the people are in the habit of thinking little of the State, and looking to their own interests, and if they need to be convinced by argument or even by hard experience that their own interests depend on the common welfare, their country will be found wanting in the hour of peril.

It is a common observation that the State is a more prominent factor in the consciousness of the ordinary German than it is in the consciousness of the ordinary Englishman, and that corresponding differences may be found in the theories of the State propounded by the thinkers of the two countries. The differences may be exaggerated: even the unsophisticated German sometimes resents the action of the State as irritating and an interference; while the Englishman, who says little about it, has often a very real devotion to the State deep down in his mind which a fit occasion will call forth. And the philosophers of both countries have put forward all kinds of theories. It would indeed be instructive if we could compare and contrast the English and the German theories of the State: especially in relation to the other things which are regarded as having value for human life, and in particular to morality. But the difficulty is that, while we might without serious error speak of the German theory of the State, there is no English theory of the State which can claim general acceptance among thinkers, or which fairly and fully repre-



sents the prevailing ideas of the people. Therefore I am not going to attempt anything like an analysis of English and German ideas on the subject. But short of this something may be done. I will contrast two views of the State and its moral functions and relations, which are widely opposed to each other. One of these views was, not so long ago, widely accepted in this country and still leaves its mark on our thought and practice, whereas it is unknown or almost unknown in Germany; and the other view is widely prevalent in Germany and seems at the present time to dominate German conduct. The two views may be called the individualist and the collectivist theories of the State. The essence of each, and its distinction from the other, will be brought out most clearly if we take them in their extreme forms as they have been expressed by their most thorough-going exponents.

The theory called Individualism has found favour among English writers because it recognizes the worth of that free initiative on which Englishmen have always set store. It builds on this basis. It starts from the side of the individual, not from that of the community. It pictures men as leading their own lives and pursuing their own objects, and would like to see them as untrammelled as possible in the exercise of their freedom: free to combine for common objects and free also to compete, each for his own profit. It recognizes, of course, that these individual men whom it has in view are all inhabitants of a single country, and

that they are connected together, probably by ties of race, and certainly by a common history and tradition ; but on these points it does not, as a rule, lay much stress. It recognizes also that they have common interests, but it is inclined to be suspicious of organized activity on the part of the community in pursuit of these interests. And in its most extreme form, it recognizes one common interest only as the true function of the State—to protect that individual freedom which the theory has postulated to begin with. By force or fraud one man may interfere with the equal freedom of another, and hence laws are needed to define wherein that equal freedom consists, and policemen to enforce the definition. Or persons outside the country, banded together in the form of another State, may interfere with the freedom of some or all of the citizens, and to guard against attacks of this sort we need a class of super-policemen called soldiers. These policemen and soldiers, along with certain officials who direct them, need to be supported by the community ; and taxes are therefore necessary. But every one sees the need of protection for his rights or liberty, so that we may assume that all will assent to taxation for this purpose. We shall have dissent and controversy only when, but as soon as, the State pushes its activity beyond this its proper business of protecting the citizens, and more dissent and more difficulty the further it trespasses beyond this boundary. The State is a joint-stock company formed for a clear and definite



purpose—that of the protection of rights or of equal liberty—and, like other joint-stock companies, it has no right to perform any act not provided for in the articles of association. This theory has been put into words by Herbert Spencer, who describes the State as a ‘joint-stock protection-society’.<sup>1</sup>

The theory which grew and hardened itself into this form has been a favourite amongst English writers. It began with Locke; it was adopted with different terminology and for somewhat different reasons by Bentham and the philosophers of the Utilitarian school; it was implicit in the commercial policy advocated and carried to triumphant issues by Cobden and Bright; Herbert Spencer has said the final word in defending it, and that final word may be said to make an end of the theory. At one time it was—or at least it may have seemed—a fit expression for the political ideals of a commercial State, at a certain stage of its development. Governments had often acted foolishly in their dealings with trade and in restricting individual enterprise; the best government seemed to be that which governed least. As long as people were free to pursue their own interests without offending against the similar right of their neighbours—as long as order was kept—there was no need to refer to the State or to think of it. It was an abstraction, a phantom pale and shadowy in the background of the commercial consciousness, almost unworthy of its

<sup>1</sup> *Social Statics* (abridged and revised 1892), p. 120.

solid and stolid representative in blue who kept the fingers of the have-nots out of the pockets of the haves.

Now for an abstraction no man would willingly die—or even live. Its thin light cannot kindle the fires of patriotism or quicken the pulse of any passion. It is a plaything of the intellect rather than a power in the man. But most Englishmen have small taste for abstractions; and indeed they have never been much affected by what their philosophers were saying or thinking. They have never been lacking in national sentiment, even in the hey-day of the most barren of political theories. And as they took little account of the theory, the theory took little account of them. It could not justify, and it never explained, that feeling of devotion to the State as a corporate body—a larger self—which slumbers dormant in the breast in seasons of fair weather but is stirred to power and passion in times of national stress.

It would not be worth while here and now to examine this individualist theory of the State: for it never had any very great hold on the people at large; it is gradually dropping out of our books; and, among prominent politicians, almost its last representative disappeared from the scene when Lord Morley softly and suddenly vanished from the Cabinet on the 4th of August 1914. But what has just been said strikes at the underlying weakness of the doctrine. It started with the individual man and took his nature as given, a thing self-centred and self-explanatory. It did

not recognize that, in emotion and in idea, man is made by society, in society, and for society, and that the social order in which he finds himself and which has fashioned his being has its most comprehensive and best organized expression in the State, to which he belongs and which has helped to make him what he is. The State is not something separate from the citizen, and it is not something separate from the community or society to which he belongs. It is this society organized as a whole and able to act as a unit. It is an artificial view of the State which likens it to a joint-stock company into which men agree to throw a limited amount of their earnings, in the shape of taxes, for the attainment of some defined object, such as the security of their lives and property. In its constitution the State involves intelligence—artifice, if you will. But the intelligence, the artifice, itself grows out of the social nature of man—the instincts and interests which unite him with others, modified and disciplined by the common history and traditions of some particular country or nation.

Nevertheless, of the individualist theory this has to be said: It leaves most things, morality among them, exactly where they were before. It is certainly not an immoral theory, though it may be said to be non-moral. The State has to do a certain limited work; and if it strays beyond its proper path, then it is not properly the State that is acting, but the ruling persons in the State, be they king or cabinet, parliament or electoral



majority. They are acting beyond and outside of their trust and should be held individually responsible. Thus we can understand the strong moral tone adopted in political matters by public men like Cobden and Bright, who held this limited view of the State's function. We can understand, too, how it was that their political criticism so often took the form of personal invective. The minister of State who stretched State functions beyond the limits they thought just was, in their opinion, false to his trust and must be called to personal account, for he was acting on his own responsibility and no longer as the State's representative. Their view never led, and never could have led, to making the State the arbiter of right and wrong, or to holding that a man's citizenship controls, and even supersedes, his moral personality. If the State may be described, on their theory, as a non-moral entity, it is only because its work and its nature are so minimized as to be hardly worth calling moral. The theory does recognize the State, but only as a name for the restricted function of restraining the predatory or other inconvenient impulses of individuals. It does not recognize it as constituting, or even as representing, the collective mind and will of the nation.

The recognition of this collective personality—as it may be called—is clear enough in the other or collective theory of the State which I now pass on to consider. A good deal more will have to be said of this other theory—which, for the



moment, I have simply called 'collectivist' to distinguish it from the individualist theories which began with Locke and culminated in Herbert Spencer. The collectivist theory gives a very different account of the State from that which we have been considering, as regards both its internal and its external functions—its relation to its own citizens and to other States. And here again I will illustrate the doctrine by taking an account of the State's nature and functions, which may seem to be, and indeed is, an extreme statement, but which is contained in a very famous and influential book.

'With regard to internal politics,' says the author, 'it is the duty of the State to care for the maintenance and increase of the population by encouraging marriage and the nurture of children, by health-institutes and the like . . . , to take means for developing man's empire over nature by well-planned and continuous improvements in agriculture, in industry, and in trade, and by maintaining the necessary balance between these three branches—in short, by all those operations which are implied in the conception of national economy, in the deeper meaning of that term.' All these objects are aimed at and pressed forward by those States which claim to be highly civilized. 'What we have seen, however, is that it is not by accident that they do these things, but of necessity. We require a guarantee, accordingly, that the State will continue to press them forward, more completely than ever, lest it lose its rank amongst

other States and at last be overthrown.' In this way the State watches over its citizens in everything that concerns their daily life and work; and in return it expects the resources of the citizens to be put at its disposal. '*It is its right to employ for its purposes the whole surplus of all the powers of its citizens without exception . . .*' The free and noble citizen offers his share willingly, as a sacrifice upon the altar of the fatherland; he who needs to be forced to part with it only shows that he was never worthy of the gift entrusted to him.' In fine, therefore, it is to be said that the individual citizen should be through and through 'interpenetrated by the State'; and in the State of 'highest civilization, that is to say, of greatest internal power', he will be so interpenetrated. His whole power of effecting results in the outer world will be turned into an instrument of the State. This doctrine of the interpenetration of the individual by the State (it is added) may be distasteful to certain fanatics of liberty; but it is consistent with true freedom, for true freedom arises only through the completest agreement with law.

On this view then, to put it shortly, the State is an organization charged with the duty of rendering all possible assistance to the people, and endowed with the right of using all the resources of the people for its purposes. What, then, are these purposes—that is, its external as distinguished from its internal functions? In his answer to this question our author is equally clear.

‘It is the necessary tendency of every civilized State to expand in every direction and to take up whatever it can find into its own civic unity. It was so in ancient history. In modern times the tendency was stemmed by the central power of the Church. . . . But when that foreign power was broken and States became stronger internally, the tendency to a universal monarchy over the whole of Christendom was bound to reveal itself.’ It may be that the rulers of States were not clearly conscious of the goal, but this was the goal of their enterprises—a universal monarchy of Christian Europe. The less powerful States struggle against this tendency, and for that reason invent and defend the doctrine of the balance of power. ‘But no State strives to maintain this balance of power except as a *pis aller*, and because it cannot compass its own aggrandizement or carry out its implicit plan for a universal monarchy. . . . Every State is either contending for this universal monarchy or else it is striving to be in a position to contend for it: it defends the balance of power when it is itself attacked by another, and it prepares in secret the means whereby it may, at its own time, itself become a disturber of the peace. This is the natural and necessary course of events, whether men admit it or not. . . . The well-known advice “threaten war that you may have peace” is equally valid in the converse “promise peace that you may begin war with an advantage in your favour”.’

‘Always, without exception, the most highly



civilized State is the most striving, the most aggressive.' If it is already predominant it will seek to increase its power by bringing lesser States within its orbit and under its protection. If it has not yet attained predominance it will use the necessary means to secure it. When not yet able to seize alien territory, it will foster its internal resources of men and means by efficient organization ; it may also by the economic penetration of other countries get them into its power ; and then, extending its influence over its weaker neighbours and developing its own internal resources, prepare for the great advance. For, in this race for power, there is no standing still. 'The State that does not go forward, falls back, and ever further back until it loses its own independence.'

Such is the idea of the State presented to us, as it is in its external relations—not always at war, but ceaselessly, scientifically, preparing for war ; seizing every advantage, ruthless of the claims of weaker neighbours, employing all the weapons which civilization puts into its grasp, and using them all for a single purpose : having no other end than this, that it should be first in the race for power and that other nations should tremble at its nod ; and recognizing, almost in words, that force and fraud are its two cardinal virtues. How different from the political paradise of Cobden and Bright, who looked upon normal international relations as an interchange of commodities between two countries each of



which profited equally by the deal ! The picture which we have now had presented to us was drawn in no paradise, political or spiritual. It is a composite portrait, and its materials come from different quarters. Hobbes long ago said that in the condition of nature every man was a wolf to every other man ; and he thought that different States were related to one another much as different men were related in their natural condition. But our author's civilized State is something much more terrible than Hobbes's uncivilized man ; it is in instinct a wild beast, in intelligence a philosopher, in design a fiend.

Who, then, was the author of the description which I have quoted or summarized ? Was it a journalist of the modern pan-Germans ? Or Bernhardt, the cavalry general, whose pen cuts through right and wrong as ruthlessly as his sword ? Or was it Treitschke, in whose hands history is always a tract for the present and future times ? Or one of those later historians or political theorists upon whom his mantle has fallen ? It might seem as if it could have been written by almost any of them. For the ruling ideas which underlie their political writings are here also, implied or expressed. The idea of the State as power, and of power as the measure of civilization (or, to use the German word, of *Kultur*) ; the idea of the omniscience of the State and of its sole duty being the increase of its power ; the denial of the rights of small nations to independent existence ; the approval of any and every means

for national aggrandizement : all these are points of common doctrine. The details have been worked out more fully ; but the outline, as I have quoted it, is clear. And it is not a modern doctrine emanating from Treitschke or any of his school. The words I have used were spoken a hundred and eleven years ago in a lecture—one of a course of lectures on ‘The Characteristics of the Present Age’—delivered in Berlin by the philosopher Fichte.<sup>1</sup>

I have quoted Fichte rather than any of the more detailed pronouncements of his modern followers, because I wish to lay stress on the fact that the doctrine of the omnicompetence of the State and of its supremacy over all moral ideas is not a modern doctrine evolved by the progress of Prussianized Germany during the last fifty years. It is a much older doctrine ; and the statement of it which I have quoted dates from a period when the greatness of Germany was a memory only—or else a prophecy. And it is contained in a document of great historical importance, both on its own account and owing to its connexion with another and still more famous course of lectures—the ‘Addresses to the German Nation’—delivered in the same place three years afterwards. The crushing disaster of Jena had intervened, and when Fichte spoke the French were still in garrison at Berlin. Prussia

<sup>1</sup> *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, Vorlesung xiv, *Werke*, vol. vii (1846), pp. 201–12. Cf. C. E. Vaughan, *The Political Writings of Rousseau*, vol. ii, pp. 518–19.

was in the depths ; but from the depths Fichte saw the stars : the promise of a new Germany and the means by which that promise could be fulfilled. To us, reading it now, much of what he says in this second course of lectures seems trivial and much of it untrue. He lays exaggerated stress on the purity of the German race as a sign of its strength and a guarantee of its future power ; and he was speaking to Prussians, who are undoubtedly of a mixed stock. He argues that the purity of the German language calls forth and cultivates the intelligence in a way from which the man whose mother-tongue is French or English is forever excluded ; and the cause seems to us trivial as compared with the magnitude of the effect claimed for it. But Germany has never stoned her prophets—at any rate, as long as they prophesied smooth things. Even her professors she has not treated with the kindly contempt to which the same class is accustomed in this country. And at that time she was in need of all the encouragement that the prophet, all the guidance that the professor, could give her. Fichte supplied them both. His vision filled her with confidence ; his practical wisdom showed her that the way to a more enduring city lay in the internal culture of the nation—in the education of the citizens. And Fichte's message stirred the people like the words of a new Peter the Hermit preaching a new crusade.

In his first set of lectures Fichte had said nothing about the German State in particular. He spoke



only of the State as such, and asserted the natural and necessary tendency of that State which possessed the highest civilization to become supreme over all others. In the second series of lectures no doubt is left as to which State owns the highest civilization, and whose, therefore, is the manifest destiny to dominate the world. As a later German historian of philosophy has put it, using the terminology of Fichte's metaphysics, Germany is 'the Ego among the nations'<sup>1</sup>—their self-consciousness and ruling principle. According to this view world-dominion will belong to Germany as of right; and she must needs press forward and assert her right, lest contentment supervene, and contentment breed security—the security that means danger. There must be no 'encirclement' to restrict her expansion outwards; she must dominate her environment. It will be right for her to make alliances for the increase of her power, but it will be wicked for other nations even to enter into understandings for their defence.

We must not misinterpret the ethical aspects of

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, Jubiläums-Ausgabe, vol. vi (1900), p. 627. Still paraphrasing Fichte, Kuno Fischer continues (p. 628): 'Other nations must receive their salvation from the Germans; the latter can work out their own salvation.' He also quotes the following sentence from another writing of Fichte's (*Nachgelassene Werke*, vol. iii, p. 243): 'If the German does not take over the government of the world by his science, then the North American races will take it over and make an end of the existing civilization.'



this doctrine. It is not altogether immoral, nor is it entirely dissociated from morality. Like Fichte's philosophy as a whole, it may be said to be rooted in a moral idea. For it is as the embodiment or realization of right that the State puts forward its claim. The same doctrine is elaborated even more emphatically by Hegel, who maintains that freedom is realized only in the State, that the individual man has no morality except as a member of the State, and that the State is an absolute end in itself: it is God's way of acting in the world.<sup>1</sup> But here Hegel draws a distinction of great importance. He distinguishes between the idea of the State and the particular States which appear on the scene in history. By the idea of the State we may say—and for our purposes the explanation will be sufficient—that he meant the perfect State or State as fully realized. Particular States may by faults or failures fall far short of the idea, and yet with all their imperfections be States, that is, have the positive living characteristics of Statehood, just as the cripple and the criminal are men though they fail to realize fully the idea of manhood. And it is the idea of the State only that Hegel describes as 'this actual God'. But, when he goes on to explain the rational and necessary constitution of the State, the characteristics which his dialectic reaches as essential thereto resemble so closely the constitution under which he lived that we are apt to think that the Prussian

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *Die Philosophie des Rechts*, § 258.

State was identified in his mind with God upon earth.

With Fichte, however, the case is quite clear. He was referring to actual States as they come before us in the history of the world. What he attributes to the State as such is something that he holds to be true of every historical State. They are not deified, as Hegel deifies his idea of the State, but they embody morality as it is for their time and people; of this morality their civilization is the expression, and the height of their civilization can be measured by their strength. The words of Treitschke<sup>1</sup>—‘the sin of weakness is the sin against the Holy Ghost of politics’—give trenchant expression to the negative side of the same doctrine: the State is power. And there is nothing above the State: it is its own absolute end: self-preservation (including self-aggrandizement) is for it the only rule. It is not founded on right as a standard by which it is bound; it is itself (for its own time and place) the highest expression and development of right. It must answer to the judgement of history—or of God—by its ability to maintain itself against outside enemies, but within its own borders there is no one who can call it in question. It has the sole right to dispose of the citizens for its welfare, which is also their welfare. If laws (that is, treaties or conventions) between State and State are to be acknowledged at all, as they are by Treitschke, for instance, they must be justified by

<sup>1</sup> H. v. Treitschke, *Politik* (1897), vol. i, p. 101.

each State from its own point of view as instruments for its self-preservation ; and only so far will they be observed. The State—so we may put it—is not *under* the moral law ; it *is* the moral law. And, as there are many States, each of which may and will make the same claim, there can be no decision between them but that of strength, no arbitrament save the ordeal of battle. Further, if any State is fully conscious that its own civilization is the highest, that its own cultural development is the supreme expression of the idea of the State—of the moral idea, therefore—it will claim for itself a liberty of action which it denies to other States which seem to it weaker and at a lower level of culture.

This consideration may explain a good deal in the mental attitude of the Germans at the present day, which otherwise seems to us inexplicable or simply childish. They may break treaties at their convenience and attack a weak neutral whom they were pledged to defend ; they may violate the laws of war which they had agreed to observe ; they may murder non-combatants by the hundred or thousand to instil a salutary terror, or for the mere pleasure of doing so : and all this is easily justified by necessity of State. But at a touch of reprisal they cry out like injured innocents. And we fail to understand their lack of self-criticism—their lack of even the most rudimentary sense of humour. It is as if the tiger were to complain that the victim which it was devouring had scratched its cheek. The explanation of this



astonishing combination of savagery and sensitiveness may be found in what has been already said. The Germans have been systematically taught to believe that in internal civilization and in external power they are beyond comparison above all other nations. They have learned their lesson well. Even in science and philosophy, the proper home of international friendship, they have grown increasingly arrogant of their own achievements—achievements which it would be foolish to undervalue—and increasingly ungenerous in recognizing the work of their neighbours. They are convinced that they are a nation apart—a ‘chosen people’, as some of their own writers have been saying of late, with a virtue and a world-mission which mark them off from all others. It is quite right for them to do to others what it would be iniquitous for others to do to them. This is the result of the theory that the State is the embodiment of morality, combined with the doctrine that the State is—Germany.

Such are the consequences of the German political theory for that wider application of morality which we call political action. Its effects upon individual morality are not the same. For the State it means self-assertion and aggressiveness; upon the individual it lays the duty of complete self-surrender. It is impossible to deny, it is impossible not to admire, the docility and thoroughness with which this lesson also has been learned by the German people. During many years they have submitted to the discipline of



armed peace, and, now that the great day has come, they offer their all upon the altar of the fatherland and give not their first-born only but their whole manhood to pass through the fire. The tragedy is that their sacrifices are made not to God but to a covetous and brutal idol. And the worshippers fashion themselves in the likeness of the god of their idolatry. Rendering themselves up to Moloch, they become like him in violence and envy—the inhuman instruments of an inhuman system. This side of German character has been revealed during many months to a world of enemies and neutrals: making the former more set in their determination to vindicate the elementary moralities, while the latter stand aside, some of them aghast, all of them trembling. This result of the system, also, might have been foreseen. For as there was nothing higher than the State to which the people might look for guidance, they were certain, in their devotion to it, to imitate also its fraud and ferocity. What the upshot will be when the ruthless system has to confess defeat, we cannot tell. Will the people's devotion to the State survive the experience of disaster and humiliation? Or will it weaken with the failure of the system to achieve its objects, so that the State itself will become a prey to the violent passions which it has aroused and encouraged? Only the future can answer the question.

The doctrine which has been passed under review is based upon a full acceptance of the theory of the collective personality of the State, and the

significance of the doctrine has been emphasized. It has been set forth in the words of one of its earliest and most influential exponents ; but his words might be paralleled by similar statements from many recent writers. Yet, even a few years ago, one might have shrunk from interpreting the language in its plain literal sense, and have been tempted to give it some esoteric or metaphysical significance. But we know now that the doctrine, in all its extravagance, has been received and acted on by a nation. It behoves us, therefore, to ask whether the view of Fichte and his followers is sound—whether, if we allow that the State is something more than a joint-stock society, we must hold also that it is under no moral law.

It is impossible, here and now, to treat this question exhaustively. But it may be possible to expose some fallacies and at least to indicate the true nature of the relation of the State to morality. To say, as is sometimes said, that the State cannot be under the moral law because there is no power above it capable of enforcing the law is, in the first place, not quite true ; and, in the second place, it is irrelevant. It is not altogether true, because the interaction of States produces a certain community of opinion and interests, and every nation has some regard—though sometimes but little regard—for the public opinion of the civilized world. And it is irrelevant, because the authority of morality does not depend upon the strength of some power which enforces

it. Even from individuals morality requires much which the State does not, and cannot, enforce ; and what holds of individuals holds of States : morality is wider than enforced obedience. Again, it is said that self-preservation is the sole duty of the State ; and this is defended on the ground that the State's self-preservation differs from that of the individual : what is egoism in the one case may, in the other, mean social service. The reason here given is perfectly correct, but it does not prove the proposition. Ethical principles, or the spirit of morality, must needs vary in their application according as their subject is an individual man or a State. Self-preservation is a more important duty for the State than for the individual, but it does not follow that it is the State's sole duty.

If we look upon the State as something that can act and be acted on as a whole, if we regard it—to use a phrase which may easily be misunderstood—as a collective personality, then the presumption is against, and not in favour of, what may be called the Germanic doctrine that it is superior to the moral law. Its personality implies that it is surrounded by other entities of a like nature—other personalities, other States. As a person it will be the subject of rights and duties—of duties as well as rights. Much confusion of thought is caused when political philosophers write of The State, as if there were only one State, a cosmopolity or world-state. What such a world-State would be like, could we realize it, is a problem on



which it is well not to dogmatize. Certainly, there is no good reason for assuming that it would be an overgrown unitary State, like the universal monarchy for which Fichte thinks every State is striving. It is at least equally likely that it would partake of the character of an extended federation. At any rate, what concerns us is not the nature of a hypothetical world-State but that of the State we are familiar with, surrounded by other States. And it is a prejudice to assert that every such State must be eternally struggling for mastery over its neighbours. The principle of 'live and let live' may yet permeate international relations, as it has already transformed the relations of individual men.

It is true that a State is, or may be, self-sufficient, to an extent that individuals cannot be. It is conceivable that a State should live its own life, and live it well, without any traffic with its neighbours. This was the case with Japan in the days when it jealously guarded its shores against the approach of foreigners. But it is no longer possible for a State to be thus self-contained and sufficient unto itself, and at the same time to hold a place in the front rank of civilization. The fruits of modern civilization have to be gathered from many quarters, and they require the co-operation and competition of many nations for their culture. The facts are very obvious, yet it may be well to remind ourselves of some of those international or supra-national forces which bind different States together into a larger



community of interests, and at once refute the doctrine of the self-sufficiency of the modern State.

In the first place there are those economic relations of interdependence, interference with which is, at the present time, a source of trouble both to belligerents and to neutrals. It was to the extension of these economic relations, especially under a system of free trade, that Cobden and his school looked for the establishment of a perpetual peace. It was their growth and complexity that induced certain misled and misleading people, even within these last few years, to assert that a war with Germany was unthinkable. The direct interchange of commodities between two countries undoubtedly makes for peace; but other economic activities—such as the competition for neutral markets and for the exploitation of undeveloped territories—bring to the front divergent interests and are amongst the greatest dangers to international friendship. Thus economic conditions tend to bring different nations into relations which in some cases unite their interests, and in others divide them. And States ought to be on the watch lest the industrial enterprises of their own citizens should take a form which threatens peace, and also lest economic penetration by the citizens of another country should be used as a preparative for war.

A second class of international interests is free from these dubious effects. Science and philosophy, art and (in a less degree) literature are values which do not lessen by being shared;

they have no national prejudices ; but every nation, as its civilization advances, becomes more and more dependent on them. There may be competition here also ; but it is competition with a difference. In industrial affairs, the competition is a struggle for profit ; in science, in philosophy, and in art it is a rivalry of excellence. And what one gains is not lost by others. The achievement of a single thinker becomes a possession of the world. A nation which attempted to be severely national in these matters, and to exclude foreign ideas and discoveries, would do far more harm to itself than to the rest of the world.

As men and nations emerge from barbarism with its primitive needs and satisfactions, they follow two currents of development which run side by side, but sometimes cross or intermingle. On the one hand, they organize and systematize their pursuit of material goods : this is the economic side of their life ; and it calls for co-operation, while, at the same time, the limits which nature sets to the product, combined with the boundlessness of desire, call forth antagonisms. On the other hand, alongside of this economic development, wants are felt for goods of the Spirit as well as goods of the body, and science, philosophy, literature, art, religion come to minister to these wants. Men and nations find their interest in these things, and in them the success of one man or of one nation spreads to others ; the glory of production or of discovery

is only enhanced by being shared by all the world. When a country grows richer by commerce, it is sometimes (though, fortunately, not generally) by driving other countries from a market or by exploiting alone a territory which had formerly been shared; and thus the gain of one country is the loss of another. But in the higher values, in the things of the mind, this is never so: new wealth in knowledge and art expands towards the distant horizon and enriches foreign lands without losing any of its value in the centre where it originated.

These things bring nations and States together into a larger community—a community based on the higher human interests. These interests at the present day have but a scanty measure of political power: so that the community which transcends the national State exercises in each country only a feeble influence upon statecraft. But even now it has some influence; it is besides a growing strength; and in the future it may do much to counterbalance the antagonisms that arise from material greed and military ambition. The question here, however, is not so much concerning its relative strength as concerning its relative value, its right to be included in the ideal of national life, and its tendency to bring different nations into concord. There is a region of values which transcend political differences and which, so far as realized or striven for, make for peace.

These statements are obvious and do not need to be elaborated. And it is in line with them that



the assertion is made that moral values, too, hold for the State: not merely for the citizens of a State, but for the State as a whole in its internal and external relations. If the State is in any sense to be regarded as a collective personality, it must have both duties and rights. This is often admitted even by writers the general tendency of whose thought seems to point in an opposite direction. 'It is very obvious', says Treitschke,<sup>1</sup> 'that, as a great institution for the education of the human race, the State must come under the moral law.' But what Treitschke gives with one hand he takes away with the other. Apart from some minor matters of courtesy rather than morals, he reduces all the duties of the State to the one duty of self-preservation. There is little argument in favour of this position; and what little there is consists in the indignant repudiation of the idea that the duty of self-sacrifice can exist for the State. The duty he selects is indeed an extreme case; but extreme as it is, I think Treitschke might be refuted out of his own mouth. The duty of self-sacrifice lies upon an individual when he is called upon to relinquish his life for a noble cause. Self-sacrifice on the part of a State will be analogous; it will consist not in the massacre of its citizens or in the alienation of its property, but in giving up its statedom—its independent existence. Now, to relinquish its independence was just what

<sup>1</sup> H. v. Treitschke, *Politik*, vol. i, p. 95; cf. H. W. C. Davies, *The Political Thought of Treitschke*, p. 164.



every German State, except Prussia, was called upon to do, and did, by the agreements which issued in the formation of the German Empire in 1871. It may be a question for some political theorists whether the constituent members of the Empire still remain States in the political sense. But it is not a question for Treitschke. He maintains most emphatically that Prussia alone remains a true State<sup>1</sup>; the others have given up their political independence—their statehood; as States, therefore, they performed an act of self-sacrifice in doing so. Moreover, Treitschke was foremost in proclaiming that it was their duty so to do. And this sacrifice of theirs was in the interests of another State, namely, Prussia. It is only when he is not thinking of this instance, and perhaps is only thinking of the desirability of freeing Prussia from all moral trammels, that he asserts that 'for one State to sacrifice itself in the interests of another would be not only immoral, it would be contrary to that principle of self-preservation which is the highest duty of a State'.<sup>2</sup>

This, however, is an extreme example. The fundamental question of political ethics is the question of justice; and if justice is interpreted, as Treitschke and others of his school interpret it, as overruled by the law of self-preservation, it loses all significance as a support of the com-

<sup>1</sup> H. v. Treitschke, *Historische und politische Aufsätze*, 5th ed. (1886), vol. ii, p. 551; cf. *Politik*, vol. ii, pp. 339 f.

<sup>2</sup> H. v. Treitschke, *Politik*, vol. i, p. 100.

munity of States. Upon a discussion of this matter, I cannot enter here. Indeed, my purpose throughout has been to explain and to illustrate rather than to argue. But the root of the whole matter lies in our attitude to this question: Does the collective personality of the State imply a duty on its part to respect the similar personality of other States, in much the same way as an individual person ought to respect personality in other men? or does it not? If we answer in the affirmative we vindicate the moral character of the State, and it will be possible for different States to live together in friendship, respecting others and respected by them. If we answer in the negative, then, with Fichte, we must hold that war and preparation for war are the continual and necessary business of a State—*civitas civitati lupus*. Hostile armies are now deciding the question, not which of these views is true, but which is to prevail in this generation and the next. The future of international morality depends upon the defeat of the Germanic system. And, when the present danger is past, the way should be clearer for working out a practical solution of the age-long problems of statecraft—the reconciliation of freedom with order and of national progress with international amity.

### III

## MIGHT AND RIGHT

BY J. S. MACKENZIE

THE tendency to identify Might with Right in international relations has been noted as a somewhat alarming feature in recent political thought, more particularly in Germany. It is associated with the *Realpolitik* of Bismarck and his followers, and still more emphatically with the theory of the State of which Treitschke was the most eloquent exponent. As one who listened, with some admiration and much more apprehension, to the impassioned lectures on politics that were delivered by Treitschke to large audiences in Berlin more than thirty years ago, I ought at least to have some appreciation of his point of view; and it is my aim in this lecture to set forth briefly what appears to me to be its essential significance, especially as bearing upon the present crisis in Europe. It is, of course, not peculiar to Treitschke and Bismarck and their immediate followers. It can be traced back at least to Machiavelli and Frederick the Great, and it has close connexions with the theories and practical policies of many other influential men. To trace these connexions with any thoroughness would obviously carry one far beyond the limits of such

a lecture as this ; nor do I possess the historical knowledge that would be needed for such a task. I must content myself with references to a few of its more important phases. Students of philosophy are naturally reminded of the doctrine that 'justice is the interest of the stronger', ascribed to Thrasymachus in the first book of Plato's *Republic*, and of the theory of human nature and of the constitution of the State that was maintained by Hobbes ;<sup>1</sup> but it is more recent views of a similar type that claim our attention here, and especially views that have been current in Germany.

Frederick II of Prussia deserved, I believe, the epithet of 'Great' as fully as most of those on whom it has been bestowed. He was in many ways a benefactor not only to his country, but to the civilized world. At an early period in his life, as is well known, he wrote an attack on the doctrines of Machiavelli. It has sometimes been thought, in view of his subsequent career, that this attack was hypocritical ; but I believe there is no real ground for this supposition. If Machiavelli is rightly regarded (as Frederick at least believed) as having given countenance to the view of Thrasymachus, that it is the function of a ruler to exploit his people for his own aggrandizement, it seems clear that Frederick had no sympathy with such an attitude. He thought of himself as the servant of his State. It was *its*

<sup>1</sup> Of course, I do not intend to imply identity in the doctrines here referred to, but only a certain kinship.



interests, not his own, that he treated as supreme. It is right to add, however, that in the pursuit of these interests he was not much troubled by any small scruples. He would have agreed with the saying that '*la petite morale est l'ennemi de la grande*'. He would have held, in general, that the welfare of the State should be the supreme consideration in the conduct of its ruler; and this is substantially the doctrine that has been more definitely emphasized by Treitschke and others in more recent times. Such a doctrine is not exactly the view that Might is Right; but it is the view that when a State has the power of promoting its welfare by any means there are no considerations that can rightly deter it from the adoption of those means. The safety of the Commonwealth is the supreme law. This I take to be the fundamental principle of what is called *Realpolitik*.

If we ask how it comes that this point of view has become so prominent in recent times in Germany, the general answer, I think, is not far to seek. It is not because the German people, or even the Prussian military caste, have (to use an old phrase) 'a double dose of original sin'. Nor is it due, to any great extent, to philosophical theories. Philosophers are, in general, interpreters rather than prophets. They come after practical developments, though they also help to guide them. It is usually in the evening, as Hegel said, that the owl of Minerva takes her flight. This is especially applicable to political

theories, which are nearly always strongly coloured by the circumstances and tendencies of the country and the generation in which they are produced. The real explanation, I believe, is that, for some generations back, the German people have been engaged in the difficult task of making themselves into a united nation; and the sentiment of nationality—the sentiment expressed in the song ‘Deutschland über Alles’—has, in consequence, become specially strong. It was not so in the time of Frederick the Great, or even for some time after. Kant had no such feeling, nor had Lessing. Kant’s interests were essentially cosmopolitan. In politics he was a disciple of Rousseau, more than of any one else; and his political activities were directed mainly to schemes for universal peace. Goethe was hardly less purely cosmopolitan in his outlook. All the leading men of that time were ‘good Europeans’, like Talleyrand or Nietzsche. It was Napoleon who first succeeded in rousing the national consciousness of Germany; and Fichte<sup>1</sup> was one of the earliest of those who emphasized—often in rather extravagant language—the greatness of the destiny to which the German people might look forward. Hegel was somewhat less affected by the new spirit of nationality; but he perhaps did even more for its subsequent

<sup>1</sup> The contrast between the political theories of Rousseau and Fichte, which is admirably set forth by Professor Vaughan in an Appendix to his recent edition of Rousseau’s Political Writings, should be referred to in this connexion.

development by the emphasis that he laid upon the State, in general, as the sphere within which the moral life of the individual becomes fully realized. In emphasizing this, Hegel was reproducing the views of Plato and Aristotle rather than those of Thrasymachus or Hobbes ; but he was reproducing them at a time when they had lost some of their truth, through the growth of influences of a more cosmopolitan character. He laid stress on the independence and self-sufficiency of the State ; and urged—somewhat in opposition to Kant—that, in cases of real conflict between national ideals, a tragic situation was created which could only be relieved by war. The doctrine that he thus whispered prepared the way for that which Treitschke proclaimed from the housetop.

I think it is important to remember that, at the period to which I am referring, two of the main influences by which international relations were preserved had been materially weakened. Up to the time of the Reformation the strongest bond of union between European nations was the Catholic Church. Next to this, and in close conjunction with it, we may place the use of Latin as an international language for scientific writings and other important forms of communication. The later use of French for similar purposes should also be borne in mind. The religious bond was broken by the Reformation ; but the immediate result of this breach was not the isolation of nations, but rather the division of



Europe into two warring camps, not coincident with any definite national boundaries. It thus served to create some fresh bonds of union among nations, as well as to accentuate differences. But it can hardly be doubted that the ultimate effect, which was beginning to be pretty fully felt in the latter part of the eighteenth century, was to make the religious unity of the European peoples much less complete than it had previously been. So far as Germany is concerned, the result of this was no doubt for a considerable time to make it into a house divided against itself; but the gradual decay of the more dogmatic forms of theology seems to have led to the diffusion in that country of an attenuated form of theism, which the upholders of national unity have apparently succeeded in converting into the belief in a tribal God who is the 'old ally' of the imperial government. Thus the cohesive force of religion has been gradually turned from international to more purely national purposes.

A somewhat similar change has to be noticed with regard to the linguistic bond of union. Latin continued to be used for scientific purposes in all European countries till about the beginning of the eighteenth century. In Germany it continued to be used in this way a good deal longer than in either Great Britain or France; and French was also used there to a considerable extent—e.g. by Frederick the Great himself—both for scientific and for literary purposes. But in the latter part of the eighteenth century



the Golden Age of German literature began ; and along with it there came a strenuous and highly successful effort to adapt the German language to scientific purposes. In philosophy Hegel was the first to attempt this in a thorough fashion—a fashion, however, that appears on the whole to have increased the difficulty of his writings, even for Germans. Thus the scientific and literary bonds, as well as the religious ones, between European countries, have been in some important respects seriously weakened ; and I think it is true to say that this has happened in Germany more recently, more suddenly, and perhaps on the whole more thoroughly, than it has in any other countries.<sup>1</sup>

It may be urged, no doubt, that the relaxation of these bonds of union has been to some extent counteracted by the strengthening of other bonds. Commercial relations and the increased facilities for travel and other means of communication

<sup>1</sup> In some respects, no doubt, our own national exclusiveness—our ‘splendid isolation’—has been even more remarkable, but in a different way. Here we have always to remember the difference in geographical position. While we have thought ourselves secure on our island, they have always had the consciousness of enemies for ever on their borders. We stand aloof from other peoples, and are rather apt to regard them, except when we are actually at war, with a slightly contemptuous good humour. The Germans, on the other hand, study their neighbours closely, but study them as actual or potential enemies. Their Empire, as they well know, has been built up by the methods of Frederick and Bismarck, ours by an almost unconscious growth.

have, of course, done much to bring the European peoples more closely together. But such modes of connexion are hardly comparable in cohesive power to the union that is brought about by religion or even by community of language. Commerce in particular—and this is most emphatically true in Germany—tends to be controlled by governments, and to be turned into an instrument of international rivalry and antagonism. Hence I think it remains true that the forces that have made for the development of a strong and somewhat exclusive national feeling in Germany have been exceptionally powerful since the early part of the nineteenth century; and, at any rate, it is very obvious that the vigorous policy of Bismarck, leading to the establishment of the German Empire, added enormously to the efficacy of these forces. The soil was thus prepared in many ways for the growth of views of the self-sufficiency of the State such as that which was so powerfully advocated by Treitschke.

There was, however, an influence of another kind which might have been expected to counter-balance the forces to which I have referred; which did, indeed, go some way to neutralize them, and which, we may hope, will be still more efficacious in the future, when the present war has come to a close. Most of the influences of which I have so far spoken have operated chiefly upon governments and upon the upper classes of the community. In contrast with all this, we have to notice the growing self-consciousness of

the labouring part of the population—a self-consciousness which the spread of education has made particularly strong in Germany. Socialism, in particular, has been exceptionally vigorous in Germany, and has taken on a strongly international character. It is probable that the sense of the solidarity of labour will in the end operate very powerfully to break down national exclusiveness; and indeed it is pretty safe to say that the governing classes in Germany, even more than in other countries, have been very well aware of this. But so far the consciousness of this has probably served mainly, by antagonism, to harden the hearts—as the heart of Pharaoh was hardened—of the upholders of national power. There is, moreover, a weakness in the labour movement itself which has prevented it from being as definitely on the side of international unity as it might have been expected to be. This weakness may, I think, be largely explained by saying that, in spite of the common use of the term Socialism in connexion with it, the labour movement has been to a large extent individualistic in its character. In order to bring this out, I must refer again to some tendencies of a more general kind.

I have so far sought to urge that the breaking down of certain bonds of international unity has tended, more particularly in Germany, to give new strength to the consciousness of the self-sufficiency of the State. But it has also tended, in some ways, to create a new sense of the self-



sufficiency of the individual. That this is true in the case of religion is, I should think, obvious enough. In our own country, for instance, the decay of Catholicism led on the one hand to the establishment of a strong national Church, and on the other hand to the formation of the Society of Friends.<sup>1</sup> In Germany similar tendencies have been apparent in Christian communities, and perhaps still more conspicuously in movements that are definitely anti-Christian. It is in this connexion that it is of some importance to take account of that remarkable writer who has perhaps been more frequently referred to than any one else in relation to the present crisis. I mean Nietzsche.

It has been pointed out, over and over again, that Nietzsche has no real connexion with the view of the State set forth by Treitschke. Like the latter, he appears to have been a Slav by descent; but whereas Treitschke became more Prussian than the Prussians, Nietzsche was definitely contemptuous of the Prussian military system and scornful of Treitschke's subservience to it. Nevertheless, the relation between the two is not entirely one of antagonism. They are connected in somewhat the same way in which Hobbes's egoism is connected with Hobbes's Leviathan. But Nietzsche on the whole stops short at the egoism. He seems to have held,

<sup>1</sup> Friendship, it may be remembered, was also the bond which, in ancient times, the Epicureans set up against the unity of the State.



like Hobbes, that human effort, like the 'endeavour' of all other beings, is essentially directed to the acquisition of individual power. The 'will to power' is the key to human nature. But whereas Hobbes glorified the State as a permanent and necessary curb upon the self-assertion of the individual, Nietzsche seems to have convinced himself rather that no such curb is wanted, except as a temporary expedient. The superman, at least, outgrows the necessity for any such restraint. Hence he was in revolt against every attempt to perpetuate human bondage; among which attempts he included—surely with some perversity—the morality of Christendom. The morality of slaves must give place to the morality of masters. There is much that is inspiring in Nietzsche's proclamation of this evangel. With a little change of phraseology—'nur mit ein bischen andern Worten'—it would seem to be not far removed from the Christian conception of liberation from the bondage of the law.<sup>1</sup> But Nietzsche was always keenly conscious that such freedom must be bought with a price. It is only to be attained by 'living dangerously', by incessant struggle, by stern self-mastery, and also, it would seem, by a certain mastery over others. It is his emphasis on this struggle for mastery that makes him appear at times to glorify war. But it seems to be mainly

<sup>1</sup> Emerson, it may be noted, was almost as much of an antinomian as Nietzsche. But, of course, his general tone and temper were very different.

in a metaphorical sense that he does so. In general, it seems clear that he does not really believe that war is the road to any final escape from slavery. Unfortunately, it is doubtful whether he ever succeeded in indicating what the true road is; and it is easy to make use of his description of the struggle for individual mastery as giving support to the efforts of States to secure dominion over others. It is probable that many of his readers find it easy to make the transition from the one thing to the other.<sup>1</sup>

Now, I think the views thus emphasized by Nietzsche are typical of a good many other egoistic or individualistic tendencies, which are on the whole opposed to the efforts of the State after self-aggrandizement, but which often play into the hands of such efforts. Even what is called Socialism is sometimes not much different from Anarchism, and is often supported in ways that involve the opposition of individuals or groups to the general interests of the State or of the world. And if this is true of Socialism, it is still more true of many forces outside of Socialism. The decay of religion is apt to mean the decay

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche has, of course, laid himself open to a good deal of misconception through his love of paradox. He was a maker of aphorisms; and to make them impressive he gave them a sharp sting. He reminds one of the saying ascribed to the poet Rogers: 'I have a weak voice; if I did not say disagreeable things, nobody would hear what I said.' This is a method of voice-production that is too often practised. Besides this, Nietzsche seems to have been always ill, and nearly always a little mad.

of the most powerful influences that enable the individual to rise above himself. When this happens, the cohesive power of the State becomes more and more sharply opposed to the disintegrating tendencies of particular individuals and groups. This is largely what has happened in Germany. The Empire has opposed itself both to the particularism of the smaller States and to the apparently disruptive forces of social democracy and other movements. Thus it is probably true that Lassalle played into the hands of Bismarck, just as Nietzsche may be said to have played into those of Treitschke. Anarchical tendencies increase the power of despotism. This, I believe, was partly what Plato meant by his contention that tyranny grows out of democracy; for by democracy he meant anarchy; and in this sense his contention still appears to be true.

It is only by such considerations as these that we can rightly understand what may be called the Prussian point of view, of which Treitschke was the ablest and most enthusiastic exponent. This point of view has not been without representatives in our own country. Carlyle, like Treitschke, was a disciple of Fichte, an admirer (with some reserve<sup>1</sup>) of Frederick the Great and of the Hohenzollerns in general, a supporter of Bismarck, an advocate of the hegemony of Germany in Europe, and one who tended to identify Might with Right. They were both

<sup>1</sup> Frederick's criticism of Machiavelli was one of the things that Carlyle scoffed at.



mainly historians and both forceful personalities of a somewhat prophetic type, rather than exact thinkers. When I heard Treitschke lecturing in Berlin, I could almost fancy at moments that I was listening to Carlyle. He had a similar sincerity and intensity or conviction and a similar hatred of cant and hypocrisy. But Carlyle was more philosophical than Treitschke, less passionate, more tempered by humour, and with a deeper insight into human nature and into the ideals by which men are governed. And he could hear his critics—whereas Treitschke was deaf. A brief reference to Carlyle's attitude may, I think, be useful at this point.

Carlyle was often charged with maintaining that Might is Right. His answer was that he did not hold that Might is Right, but rather that Right is Might. Against this it has been urged that, if either of these sayings is seriously pressed—if, that is, either of them is regarded as an equation—the two are exactly equivalent. This is, of course, obvious ; but it may be safely said that neither Carlyle nor any others who have put forward such statements have ever intended them to be understood strictly as equations. Those who say that Might is Right—as Bernhardt, for instance, appears pretty definitely to do—mean that Might, and especially the Might of an organized State, is the basis or ground upon which Right is established. Those, on the other hand, who say that Right is Might, mean that Right is the ultimate source of Strength.



To treat the two statements as equivalent would be like regarding the statement that Knowledge is Power as equivalent to the saying that Power is Knowledge. Nevertheless, it is not altogether easy to keep the two statements distinct ; Carlyle at least was not very successful in doing so. Carlyle's view was, in the first instance, based on an optimistic theory of the Universe—a theory which he expressed in the saying that ' the great Soul of the world is just '.<sup>1</sup> Referring to Moham-med's advocacy of the use of the sword, Carlyle said, ' In this great duel Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong. The thing which is deepest rooted in nature, what we call truest, that thing, and not the other, will be found growing at last.' This certainly comes very near to the doctrine of the ' survival of the fittest ' in the ' struggle for existence ', on which Bernhardt and others rely in their defence of war as the arbiter of national destiny. At least one wants to know what Carlyle understands by *Truest*. Does it mean ' best ' or only ' best adapted to the circumstances ' ? Moreover, Carlyle was constantly telling us that it is impossible to ascertain the Rights of Man, whereas their Might can be pretty easily discovered ; and I think it is true to say that in his later writings the optimistic theory of the universe has largely disappeared. Hence it is not altogether unfair to say that in

<sup>1</sup> Which has been otherwise expressed by the saying that the history of the world is the judgement of the world (*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*).

the end his doctrine is hardly distinguishable from the view that Might is the only practical basis for Right in human affairs. In view of the confusion that is thus created, it is very desirable to try to understand what the real connexion between Might and Right is.

That the two conceptions are in some respects closely connected is obvious enough. What is right for us to do is partly dependent on what we can do ; and what it is right for us to have is partly dependent on what we can use effectively. Plato, who was very definitely opposed to the theory that Might is Right, yet regarded justice in the State as consisting mainly in assigning to each one the work for which he is fitted and the instruments—and especially the education—that are required for its efficient performance. Again, when Kant—who also was no supporter of the doctrine that Might is Right—sets forth the famous saying, ‘Thou ought’st, therefore thou can’st,’ it would seem to follow as a corollary that when we cannot we ought not. Thus, in both cases, what is right is dependent on some form of might ; and this is a fact that it is often important to bear in mind. Ineffective efforts, however well intended, are not right. Social reformers are constantly made aware of this. Tolstoy—another great opponent of the doctrine that Might is Right—was constantly pulled up in his efforts after the improvement of social conditions by finding that they could not be improved by the methods that he tried. As soon

as he found that he had no might to accomplish anything in that way he recognized also that it was not right to attempt it.<sup>1</sup> All would agree that Don Quixote is not the model of the perfect knight. Now, this limitation of rights by the absence of might, which is very apparent in the life of individuals, is no less clear in the case of States. As an illustration of what I mean, take the case of a half-civilized country in which considerable sections of the people are oppressed by misgovernment. A more highly civilized and better governed neighbouring nation may feel called upon to interfere; and the question may be raised whether it is right for it to do so. Most people, I think, would agree that the answer to this question turns largely on the question of power. If the oppression in the former country is very intolerable, and it is clear that the more civilized nation would be able to relieve the oppression and establish a better form of government, it would be generally allowed that there is a strong case for interference. Even Mr. Russell, who is a pretty extreme opponent of war, appears to admit that in such a case armed intervention could be justified. But if it were clear that the more civilized nation would not be able to accomplish this, and would probably only make matters worse by interference, it would hardly be wise to attempt it; and what is not wise is not right.

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, depends on the methods being essentially impracticable. It is often right to attempt what is at the moment impracticable, with a view to the future.



A blunder in such a case might be almost worse than a crime.

It appears from such instances that both for individuals and for States the question what it is right to do is dependent on the previous question, what it is possible to do. Right action, in short, whether for a State or for an individual, is the best action that is *possible*. In this sense, the consideration of Might may be held to be prior to that of Right; and this, I believe, is what Carlyle meant by saying that we have first to consider Might. But, unless we take a purely fatalistic view of human life, it must be allowed that there are, in general, several lines of action that are possible; and among these it is right to choose the best—i.e. the one which, as far as we can judge, will be the most efficacious in the promotion of human welfare. How this is to be estimated, we cannot here consider. If so much is admitted, it seems clear that the aim of an individual is not the affirmation of his power. It is not the will to power by which he is rightly guided, but the will to general welfare; but, in seeking to promote this, he has to take account of his power, and, if he is wise, he will seek to develop it to the utmost for this purpose. And I am not sure that even Nietzsche means to affirm anything more than this, though he tends to state it in an ego-centric way. It is really the highest development of the human race that he has in view, not the self-assertion of individuals. At any rate, I assume here that this is



the right conception of the end. Now, what I wish to urge is that what is right for a State is determined in the same way ; and this is where the main difference of opinion tends to come in. It is urged by some that a State has to affirm its might in a sense in which it is not right for an individual to do so. There are two chief points that are emphasized in this connexion. One is that the individual has his rights assigned and protected by the State ; whereas the State has to secure and defend its own. The other is that an individual may be called upon to sacrifice himself for the sake of the State ; whereas it can never be right for the State to sacrifice itself. It will be well to deal with these two points separately. What I seek to maintain is that, though the duties of a State and of an individual are different in detail, they are not different in principle. It may be convenient to take the question of self-sacrifice first, as being the simpler of the two.

The difference between a State and an individual in this respect is almost too obvious to need mentioning. An individual is often called upon to give up his life ; whereas it is hardly conceivable that any such call could be made upon a nation. But the reasons for this are very apparent. Setting aside the question of individual immortality, it is evident that individuals ' have but span-long lives ' ; and they are liable to be brought to an end by the most trivial accidents. That life should be lost in a great cause is generally

felt to be hardly a calamity. Such a loss is often preferred to its destruction by accident or decay, and is sometimes even regarded as glorious and sublime. A nation has no such natural limit. There is, indeed, nothing that quite corresponds in it to the death of an individual. The land in which a nation carries on its life does not perish, as the body of an individual perishes. Its spirit also persists, in a sense in which that of an individual rarely does. Nor is it often that a race completely dies out. The Jews still retain their national consciousness. It is, indeed, hardly within a nation's power to give up its life in any intelligible sense. It does not follow, however, that a nation may not be called upon to make a sacrifice. Even in the case of an individual, it is but seldom that life is completely given up of set purpose—seldom even without some effort to preserve it. The sacrifice of life is only one of a number of ways in which an individual may renounce something that he values highly. He does this for the sake of something else that he values still more highly. Now, a nation of men is no doubt a thing of greater value than a single man. But a State also may renounce something that it values. It may give up some portion of its territory. It may, for instance, grant independence to some of its colonies. It may cripple its resources in a struggle for religion, for justice, for honour, or for the defence of some other State. It may undertake a troublesome responsibility. It may consent to a treaty that curtails

its liberty of action. It may make costly provision for the future. It may even consent to be merged in the life of a larger State (as in the case of England and Scotland), without thereby losing its national spirit and its best traditions. There are many ways in which it may be called upon to give up something that it values for the sake of something that it values more ; and, in all such cases, it is making a sacrifice, in the same sense in which an individual makes one. It is true, of course, that the good at which it aims is much more rarely something that can be entirely distinguished from its own life, than in the case of an individual. But, even with individuals, he who loses his life in one sense often saves it in another. At any rate, the principle is the same. In both cases the greater good may involve the surrender of the less. And in both cases what determines the greater good is the welfare of mankind, the conservation of those eternal values on which what is best in human life depends.

Similar considerations apply to the other point of difference, to which reference has been made. It is true that the rights of an individual are to a large extent determined and maintained by the State ; whereas the rights of a State are maintained and to some extent determined by itself. But the distinction is by no means an absolute one. A well-organized State expresses the general will of its people. It embodies in its laws and in its executive actions the best results of the growing knowledge, intelligence, and moral purpose of



the past and present lives of its inhabitants. But even the best of States does not accomplish this with any great completeness. The individuals in it have to be constantly striving to bring it more and more into harmony with what they recognize as best, 'eternally vigilant' in guarding its liberties, critical—sometimes almost to the point of violent revolution—of its antiquated traditions, its slow improvements, its dangerous lapses. Walt Whitman no doubt exaggerated a little in saying that the great people is one that 'thinks lightly of its laws'; but it is certainly one that is critical of its laws and constantly in readiness to change them. The laws of a progressive people are no more rigidly fixed than is its science or its religion. They are all being continually formed anew by the struggles of individual thought. These struggles, moreover, tend more and more to be carried on not merely within particular States, but by means of international intercourse. Our philosophy, our science, our religion, our art, our methods of organizing labour, our methods of caring for the poor, our forms of taxation, our conceptions of education, of national service, of tariffs, of property, of family life—all the vital interests of the nation—are being perpetually influenced not merely by the knowledge, intelligence, and moral purpose of our own people, but almost equally by those of other peoples. Where there is a difference of language and of previous traditions, such influences are apt to be somewhat slow and



intermittent ; but where there is identity or strong similarity in these respects—as between the United States and ourselves—the influence is constant and rapid.

But it may be urged—and this I take to be the essence of Treitschke's contention—that the State is, at any rate, the ultimate power by which whatever has been won by any particular civilization is established and maintained. It is the guardian of a nation's *Kultur*. This, I suppose, is true ; and there are not many who would seek to deny it. There are few people in this country who would wish to destroy either the fleet that guards our shores or the police who protect our property and our lives. That the State is, among other things, a power,<sup>1</sup> is obvious enough. But it is not power for the sake of power : it is power for the maintenance of welfare. The State exercises this power in a large way, the individual in a relatively small one ; but the principle is essentially the same. The police, for instance, could not protect us, if they were not able to rely upon the support of the man in the street. The power of the State is simply an organized extension of the power of individuals. Such an organization makes possible the continued advance in national welfare which otherwise would not be possible ; and this I take to be the significance of all forms of might in human life.

<sup>1</sup> If Treitschke had said that *Government* is power, he might have been nearer the truth. But the State is more than the Government.

What I am seeking to maintain is that there are two things that we have always to bear in mind—what is *good* and what is *possible*. In all action what we have to consider is, What is best among things that are possible? or, What is possible among things that are good? And again, How can what is not at present possible among things that are good be made possible in the future? All this seems so obvious when it is stated that one wonders whether it is worth while to state it at all. But it is just these obvious things that are apt to be confused by sophistry. The tragedy of human life was summed up by Shelley in the words :

The good lack power save to shed idle tears :

The powerful goodness lack—worse need for them.

Yet we may surely say, in general, that if the good are fit for nothing but to shed idle tears—or even, let us say, carry on an ineffectual diplomacy—there is some reason to suspect that they are not as good as they might be. Goodness is active : it is a will that can nearly always find a way. Efficiency is not the same thing as goodness ; but there is no real goodness that does not at least strive to make itself efficient. Right seeks to become Might : what is best has to be made possible and actual. An optimistic faith may lead us to believe that this is always in process of achievement ; and, even without such a faith, we may see that it has a certain tendency to realize itself. The man who aims

at what is right will generally be more single-hearted in his devotion, more persistent in his efforts, and more careful in the use of means, than the man who aims at what is wrong ; and the aims of the former are more likely to be in harmony with the general will of humanity, and so may secure a more ready support. Right supports right, whereas wrongs are, to a large extent, opposed to one another. Hence Shakespeare's saying, 'Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just,' is perhaps not greatly exaggerated—at least when it is applied, not to the quarrels of individuals, but to the large movements of history. But, so far as our human experience goes, even this triple armour is often not enough. The things that have been pleasing to the gods have not always been such as would give satisfaction to a Cato. In any case, we have to recognize that it is only by our utmost effort that what is right prevails.

Now, how does all this bear upon the present situation ? How, in particular, does it bear upon the aspirations of the German people, as conceived by Treitschke and, in a more modest way, by Carlyle ? In order to answer this, we must try to see more definitely what these aspirations are. I will try to put them at their best, so far as I understand them. Their first presupposition, I think, is that at present Germany represents the highest form of civilization that has so far been reached. They are the people foremost in *Kultur* ; and this *Kultur* has to be maintained



by the Might of the State. In their efforts after this they are restricted by the powers of surrounding nations, and especially by the British control of the seas. Hence it is necessary to crush, or at least greatly weaken, these surrounding forces, before Germany can secure such a 'place in the sun' as will enable her *Kultur* to develop freely. This object is so important, not merely for Germany, but for the civilization of the world, that it justifies a war on a large scale—especially as war is, to some extent, a good in itself, and also the inevitable means by which the survival of the fittest is secured. For such an end the violation of treaties and a certain amount of 'frightfulness' may well be pardoned; just as a surgical operation may be accepted for the sake of health.

Now, if all the premisses are granted, I suppose the conclusion must be admitted. The chief premisses are: (1) German civilization is the highest; (2) That civilization is prevented from spreading itself by the opposition of other nations that are relatively barbarous or decadent; (3) War is the inevitable means whereby a higher civilization becomes dominant over a lower one. These are, if I understand him rightly, the chief contentions of such a writer as Treitschke; and, with some qualifications, they seem to have been held also by Carlyle—at least in his later years.<sup>1</sup> Now, if it is admitted that German civilization is

<sup>1</sup> It was in Treitschke's later years also that his doctrine became hardened.



so much higher than others that the rest may be regarded as relatively barbarous, it would at least follow that it is very desirable that that civilization should have every opportunity of being maintained and spread. It might even follow that Germany should have a certain hegemony among other nations of Europe or of the world. It would hardly follow that others should be ruthlessly crushed. Even then we might rightly fear that one good custom might corrupt the world. But this much, I believe, would be allowed by Treitschke, and certainly by Carlyle. Again, if it is admitted that war is the inevitable means by which a higher civilization is maintained and spread, the policy of the mailed fist might be largely justified; and it might be asked whether those nations that have not sufficiently prepared themselves for the exercise of force, may not be justly charged with 'the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin'—the kind of weakness that Treitschke characterized as the unpardonable sin in politics. One might even have to allow, on this assumption, that as 'the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath', so even Treaties are justified only as means for the support of human welfare, and may be set aside when human welfare is clearly at stake.<sup>1</sup> It is necessary, therefore, to inquire whether the three premisses to which I have

<sup>1</sup> It is well to observe, however, that, in the recent instance which is in every one's mind, nothing of this sort appears to have been pretended.

referred can be granted. They can, of course, be only very briefly dealt with in such a lecture as this.

That German civilization is, in certain respects, the highest, must, I think, be admitted. It is the highest in almost everything that is expressed by the term Organization; and I suppose it must be allowed also that the Germans have been supreme in music and in constructive philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Their superiority in other respects is not so apparent. In literature they have the great name of Goethe; and they had a golden age at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century; the fruits of which, however, if the works of Goethe were omitted, and some others that are rather philosophical than literary, could hardly be described as more than second-rate. Even Carlyle, their chief admirer, confessed that at that time their literature as a whole was not as rich as that of Italy, or even Spain—not to speak of our own country and France. Since that time, as far as I can judge, several other countries have distinctly surpassed them. Their organization of educational work has enabled them to produce a great deal of material in the special sciences and in scholarship; yet it is

<sup>1</sup> I am not forgetting that some of their greatest musicians—like many of their most striking personalities in other spheres—were Jews, or belonged to other nationalities; and that Kant was of Scottish extraction. The spirit of a nation can hardly be judged on purely racial grounds. What it can assimilate may fairly be counted as a genuine part of its own life.

doubtful whether they have had in science any one quite equal to Newton or Darwin, or in history to Gibbon. On the whole, it is not clear that they have shown any distinct intellectual superiority over their neighbours ; and it would be still more difficult to show that they are superior artistically or morally. One might be pardoned, indeed, for putting the last point rather more strongly, were it not that it might seem to be, in some degree, begging the question. It is certainly difficult for us, at the present time, to refer in any measured terms to the barbarity and vandalism that appear to have been displayed in their recent conduct. One can only understand it, and perhaps partly condone it, by remembering that it grows out of the thoroughness of their devotion to a quasi-religious doctrine of the State—the worship of the great Leviathan ; not a very high form of worship, yet higher, we may admit, than the worship of Mammon or of Self, which are too often its chief alternatives. Their violence in war may almost be classed with those religious persecutions by which the remoter past is so darkly stained ; or we may compare it with that of the French Revolution, with its Goddess of Reason. Religious devotion, turned into fanaticism, recognizes no authority above its special object, and shatters ruthlessly every other object—selecting, almost by preference, what is fine and beautiful—that is outside and opposed to itself.

‘ *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.* ’



There is something impressive in such fanaticism, even when it excites our horror and detestation. We may hope that such manifestations of a fanatical spirit are only temporary, and are not to be regarded as a permanent expression of the national temper. They are, I think, mainly to be ascribed to Prussia, not to Germany in the larger sense.<sup>1</sup> Still, they must in some degree affect our judgement of the general character of the people. It is somewhat rash to pronounce such judgements; but I think it is not unfair to say that the Germans have nearly always been somewhat deficient in the quality that the Greeks called *σωφροσύνη*, the quality that puts a curb on 'vaulting ambition' and extravagance. It is perhaps for that reason that music is the art in which they have chiefly excelled<sup>2</sup>—the art in which *Schwärmerei* has the fullest scope. We, on the other hand, are probably kept too much in check by lack of imagination and by fear of ridicule, which is not always the 'test of truth', and which is rather apt to prevent us from having a whole-hearted devotion to anything. We postpone our serious problems as long as we can, and in the end accept, a little ruefully, some plausible compromise. This may be partly due to

<sup>1</sup> There are, I think, grounds for believing that the general moral tone of the German people has not been seriously deteriorated. I may refer, for instance, to the interesting book *Eight Years in Germany* by I. A. R. Wylie.

<sup>2</sup> Even Goethe, it is perhaps worth observing, was mainly musical and philosophical. He was not, I think, in any supreme degree, dramatic.



the fact that, as a united nation, we represent an older civilization, which has sown its wild oats and become staid and proper. There are enthusiasts in this country; but their ideas and projects are generally accepted, if accepted at all, with some 'grains of salt'. This was probably the source of one of the mistakes that were made in this country. We were apt to suppose that the somewhat wild utterances of some German writers were not taken quite seriously. We did not sufficiently realize that there was a scarcity of 'salt' in Germany. But all peoples have the 'defects of their qualities'; and it would not be easy for any nation to prove its absolute superiority to any other.

Such apparent supremacy as the Germans have at the present time seems to be mainly due to their magnificent organization—especially their organization of education and research, which have been most shamefully neglected in this country—and the comparative newness of their national institutions, which gives them something of the vigour of youth. Technical education is the chief source of their strength. They are not as much hampered as some other peoples are by old traditions. Custom does not, to the same extent, 'lie upon them with a weight heavy as frost and deep almost as life'. They are more ready to accept new ideas and make a clean sweep of the old ones. Perhaps sometimes, in cleaning out the bath, according to one of their own proverbs, they are liable to empty out the

child along with the water. But, on the whole, their openness of mind makes for efficiency. The claims that are sometimes made for a superiority of race can hardly be taken seriously; though an English writer resident in Germany—Houston Chamberlain—has been among the foremost in emphasizing it. Any apparent force in such a contention is only gained by speaking of the German race in so wide a sense as to include a large proportion of the inhabitants of nearly all the countries in Europe. Prussia, in any case, would seem to be mainly inhabited by a mixed race; and, indeed, there are some grounds for thinking that mixed races, though perhaps not the finest and most amiable, are usually the keenest in intelligence and practical power. But the study of races is certainly not as yet a very exact science. How far educated Germans are really influenced by any such theories of racial superiority I do not know; but it seems to be true that their rulers try to impress upon them some such conviction, and to represent them as being in some way specially pleasing to the divine power. Such ideas have not been unknown in our own and other countries.<sup>1</sup> Now, unless

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the chief difference between the Germans and ourselves in this respect is, that our conviction is less aggressive, because it is more deeply seated. 'God's Englishmen' are generally too proud to boast, believing on the whole that it goes without saying that they are, if not 'the lords of humankind', at least the salt of the earth. Nietzsche, it may be worth noting, regarded the French as the most highly civilized of modern peoples.

the essential superiority of the Germans can be conceded, a large part of their claim disappears. But, of course, it would still remain true that German civilization is a large part of the civilization of the world, and a part that could ill be spared.

But is it really the case that the development of that civilization is hampered by surrounding civilizations? There is little doubt that it has been impeded by the need, or supposed need, for vast military preparations. The mutual fears of the various nations in Europe impose great burdens upon them; but the remedy for this would seem to lie in the removal of these fears by the abandonment of aggressive designs. Apart from this, there seems no reason to think that the development of German civilization has been seriously impeded within the country itself; and certainly the influence of their educational and scientific ideas and of their musical art has been able to extend itself freely throughout the world. How far they are really in need of colonies is a moot point. Bismarck did not much favour that form of expansion. In any case, one would suppose that what is needed in this respect could be gradually acquired by the development of their trade and the cultivation of friendly relations with other powers. It is probably true, however, that the chief difficulty is found at this point. A growing nation that feels the need of 'a place in the sun' is naturally jealous of a long-established empire on which 'the sun never sets'.



If we are not to have recurrent wars on a gigantic scale, the leading nations must learn to practise a policy of give and take in this respect more fully than they have done in the past. Bismarck's favourite maxim, *do ut des*, might be applied more freely than it has been, and with a more definite authority from international tribunals. It must be admitted that the problem is not an easy one; but, if the nations of the world really wanted to live peacefully together, it can hardly be doubted that a solution could be found.

And so we come to the final question, Do they want to live peacefully together? It is here that we are brought face to face with the view that war is not merely inevitable, but desirable, as the only means by which the higher civilizations can gain supremacy over the lower. Or are we even to go further and say, with Nietzsche, that 'a good war sanctifies any cause'? Perhaps a good war does. War for freedom, war to put down oppression, does sometimes sanctify. And I suppose that was what, in his paradoxical way, he meant. It raises men above their petty selfish interests, and makes them feel that there are some things for which it is worth while to sacrifice even life itself. But such wars presuppose the existence of oppression; and between great nations that claim to be civilized—especially between nations that profess to be governed by Christian ideals—such wars should not be needed. The ground on which wars between great nations have in recent times been justified has been



chiefly the biological conception of the 'struggle for existence' as tending to produce 'the survival of the fittest'. The fallacy in this has been so often exposed that it is not necessary for me to say much about it. The leading exponents of evolution in this country, however much they may differ among themselves in other respects, have given no countenance to it. It was repudiated by Darwin, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer. The fittest to survive are not necessarily the best; and in war it is, to a large extent, the best who are destroyed—'the flowers of the forest'. The nations also that have perished in international struggles have often been among the finest; and it has taken the world long ages to recover the fruits of their vanished civilizations. We may have to admit that in the past there was no other method. The appalling annals of the early Jewish people may have been necessary for their consolidation and for the development of purer conceptions of religion. It may have been necessary for Rome to struggle for the establishment of the rudiments of justice and social order in Europe. At any rate, as independent nations, they both perished by the sword. But that anything can be won for the advancement of mankind by a vast conflict of modern nations, representing on the whole the same general level of civilization, it is hard to believe. It would certainly need some enormous gain to compensate for the loss of life and the means of life, the embitterment of feeling, the shattering of generous

hopes for the unity of mankind, by which such contests are accompanied. That some virtues are elicited by war may readily be allowed. There is such a thing as a purification by fire. 'Red ruin and the breaking up of laws,' like shipwrecks, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, may be instruments of regeneration. But surely nature may be trusted to see to it that our life is not too purely a primrose path. The real difficulty, of course, is to find any other means than that of war by which the fundamental disagreements of great nations can be removed. There is certainly no easy method. Even Kant recognized that the road to a 'federation of the world' is a long and thorny one. All that one can urge, with any confidence, is that there is, at any rate, no sound *theoretical* reason against making the attempt. It is for practical statesmen to meet the difficulties in detail. But, first of all, they must see to it that we have might enough to defeat the enemy—an enemy who evidently, in his present temper, knows no argument but force.

## IV

# THE STATE AND SOCIETY

BY A. D. LINDSAY

THE antithesis which I have chosen for the title of my lecture is a common one in political theory. The assertion and the denial of the distinction have formed the shibboleths of two opposing schools. That Society and the State are the same is as evident to one school as that they are different is to another. What does the distinction mean, that is the first thing to find out, or, if the distinction is an unreal one, what at least is it meant to mean? Let us begin with Society. For if the vaguer, it is certainly the warmer and more living word. A society is a fellowship, a joining together of men for some common work. When we say that man is a social animal, we mean that men naturally live together, share in one another's joys and sorrows, co-operate for common ends, or, at the worst, that they cling together, have the same prejudices and antipathies, and look to one another for moral support. Any body of men who unite for a common purpose is called a society. By a fine tact the English language has refused to give that name to an economic organization. In modern life men can get their bread together without sharing a real common purpose, and in spite of *Société anonyme*

and *Aktiengesellschaft* we call them when they do so, a company and not a society. Society, without the article, means men's common life and co-operation including their economic activities. Its boundaries, like the boundaries of Society with a big S, are vague and ill-defined. There is a sense in which all men are one society as there is another in which there may be several societies in one small town. For men's sociableness admits of degrees, and is, like all personal things, indefinite and elusive.

In contrast with this elusiveness the State is a definite and precise organization. Its boundaries are delimited, its members are known. A man may belong to several societies, in the vaguest sense of that term, or to many associations; he can belong to only one State. Its precise and definite nature the State owes to law. It is the organ, the expression, and the upholder of law; and it is the aim of law to formulate and classify and make definite human relationships, a process which has both advantages and drawbacks.

When men discuss the relation of the State and Society, then they are concerned with facts such as these. Men are divided into separate political organizations called States, and these States form communities marked off from one another, but men's social relations are neither exclusively created nor exhausted by their political organization. Nevertheless, the stability of the State depends upon the solidarity of its members, though political bonds are not the only ones that constitute and maintain



that solidarity, nor is it necessarily conterminous with political boundaries. Within the same State the ties that bind men together, common religion, language, and social customs, common interests, also divide men into separate and sometimes opposing groups, while at the same time these non-political solidarities extend beyond political boundaries and unite men of different States. Further, men in virtue of their sociableness have formed all manner of non-political societies whose claims may, and sometimes do, conflict with those of the State.

When therefore men maintain the identity or assert the distinction of Society and the State, they are considering the relation of the political organization and these vaguer social bonds which are called Society. The one school maintains that the political organization is supreme and all-embracing, that all other associations have no more than such power and authority as it may delegate to them, that in the State they live and move and have their being. The other school maintains that the State is only one among other associations, though a very important one, that its powers and authority may be limited, and that in the case of conflict between the State and other associations the State is not necessarily in the right.

This second view has been the characteristic doctrine of English political theory. It has been often stated with false and dangerous exaggeration. The State has been reduced almost below the level of a limited liability company, has been regarded as a retailer of justice as other firms are

of boots. More recently it has been held that the political organization is of such little consequence that it does not matter to what State a man belongs. Man's moral and economic life is what really matters. That he can live, indifferent to political boundaries, and if that be preserved it matters little to what particular shop he goes or is compelled to go for justice, provided it belongs to a reputable firm, which will supply a reasonably good article. Let the deluded Germans insist on forcing their article on the rest of Europe. It is foolish of the Germans to take such a deal of trouble for less than nothing. It would be as foolish of Belgians or Frenchmen or Englishmen to put any obstacles in their way, if they insist on doing so. The falsity of such views need not be laboured. Society and the State cannot so be detached from one another. Even if we think of the State as the organ of Society, clearly it is only by having control over that organ that a society can control and mould its own destinies. If Society is to have a common purpose, if it is to inspire with mind all the confusion and discord incident to economic life, it must evolve and work through a political organization. The State is no mere adjunct of Society. Political constitutions cannot be changed at will. They are the expression of the social habits and ways of mind of the members of the State, or they are nothing.

And this exaggeration does not represent the traditional English view. Foreign observers have always noticed our national complacency,

and we all have a sneaking sympathy with Mr. Podsnap's dictum that this country has been blessed to the direct exclusion of 'such other countries as there may happen to be'. The characteristic tendency in England has been to combine an intense patriotism and national pride with a profound distrust of the political organization, to think of the community as consisting primarily in the multifarious spontaneous life and combination of its members, to be very jealous for the rights of private individuals and corporations and societies. Nineteenth-century experience has taught us that this spontaneous life of Society, if left to itself, produces disastrous results, that it needs constant state control and interference. But however strongly we feel the necessity of such control and direction, convinced Socialists as we may be, we think naturally of the State or the political organization as repairing the shortcomings and the mistakes of individuals. The non-political life of Society somehow comes first in our consideration. It is chaotic and unorganized and lacking in insight, and without the State would quickly fall a prey to its own worst elements and the shortsightedness of all its members. Nevertheless, it is the real life of the community. Without the State it could not exist, without it the State would be worthless. In the event, therefore, of a conflict between the State and any other organization, it does not necessarily follow, though it may very well be, that the State has the prior claim to



loyalty. Both must be tested by their contribution to the life of the community. The political organization has to do especially with the enactment of law. Its aim is to enforce a certain minimum standard of behaviour and to put into the hands of its members a certain minimum equipment for the work of life that only common action and control can give. Without it, therefore, the community could not even begin that

‘ most difficult of tasks to *keep*  
Heights which the soul is competent to gain’.

The State is an indispensable rampart within which alone the life of the community can develop. If there is any danger of the dykes being cut, we have all to turn to and give our aid, but that is no reason for identifying the rampart with what it protects.

Let us compare with this the view that identifies Society and the State. Its supporters do not mean to deny the difference between governmental and other organizations. Rather they refuse to identify the State and government. The State is for them the whole politically organized community. They are concerned to insist that men’s political and social activities are not cut off from one another in water-tight compartments ; that any community is a whole expressing itself alike in voluntary and state organization ; private charity and poor relief are, for example, both the work of the community. In such a standpoint there is much that is of value and importance. To



accept it may well be an indispensable preliminary to a sound political theory, but it is well to realize that it cannot be more. For in itself it gives no guidance whatever as to the proper relation of governmental and other relations within this whole community which it prefers to call the State. In the primitive State no doubt the unity and solidarity of the community is the one prominent fact, but as civilization develops it brings with it increasing specialization of function, and conflicts and divergences of view between the different specialized organizations, the political and the ecclesiastical, or the industrial. The problems thus arising compel us to admit the difference, and to consider the relation between Society and the political organization.

The difference between the two theories is more than one of words or than an insistence that all the organizations whose relations we are discussing are to be thought of as being together in one whole community, the State. That it is much greater than this is revealed if we ask the advocates of the second theory what they mean by 'the community', or 'the State'. Do they mean such States as England or France or Germany? and if so, if they insist on the organic connexion of organizations within a community, how can they deny the organic connexion of the different communities within the civilized world? The point is most important. Primarily, I think, the advocates of this theory are not thinking of existing States but of the State as such, the State in the realms of pure idea. But if

their doctrine is to have any application to facts at all, it will have to apply to a world in which there are separate States and societies whose bounds are not conterminous. When so applied the doctrine has momentous consequences. For its implication is that what separates one community from another is the possession of an independent political organization, and therefore that men's social relations are to conform to their political relations, that States should be, though they are not, entirely comprehensive of the social relations within them, and that they should not be, though they are, interpenetrated by relations from without. Political organization is thus made the standard of a community, and clear-cut precise boundaries are to be decisive over the vague boundaries of social relations. In fact, the chief upholders of this view have held that it is only in and through a State that social relations have any value. They have ordinarily combined it with a doctrine of state sovereignty which maintains that the political organization is necessarily supreme over all other forms of organization.

As thus developed the doctrine is no longer, as it pretends to be, a theory of what is, but of what ought to be. There was a time when the community acting as a whole absorbed and controlled all social life, namely, in the primitive community. That is no reason why the religious and economic and artistic life which has achieved an activity largely independent of the State, should be put back under the tutelage of the political organiza-

tion. There have been times, as in the fifth century B. C. in Greece, or in the seventeenth century, when the political organization has enclosed a community largely self-contained. The Greek city State and the seventeenth-century nation State were States of that kind. That is in itself no reason why the social relations which cut across state boundaries should be discouraged and the modern State be made as far as possible self-contained. Yet Hegel and Treitschke maintain that it is of the essence of the State that it should turn its back on these developments of modern times. The State according to them stands for a certain culture, that is a certain type of social relation and structure, and to develop, maintain, and direct that is its chief function. The State is an all-inclusive community. It is a sovereign independent person, and therefore it can enter into no binding relations with other States that would compromise that independence; that it may show its separation from other States, war is of its essence. It is supreme over all other organizations. But, says Treitschke, it is distinguished from other organizations in the possession of force. Therefore in politics force is of supreme authority. The argument throughout is of the same character. It begins by insisting, and rightly, that a politically organized community is superior to a community without such organization. The State is the whole community thus organized. It goes on to argue the superiority of the State as political organization over the rest of the community. The civilized



world is divided between different political organizations ; therefore it is divided into so many communities and no more. But there are communities which do not conform to the boundaries of the States. Such recalcitrant facts which fail to conform to theory should obviously be suppressed. The all-comprehensiveness of the State is first made the basis of the supremacy of the political organization, and then the supremacy of the political organization is made the ground for the all-comprehensiveness of the State.

The exaggerations of German political theory come from neglect of the fact that the communities into which men are divided are not isolated ; the exaggerations of English theory from neglect of the fact that they are divided into communities. If we take from English theory the truth that the political organization depends upon and exists for the sake of Society and not vice versa, and from German theory the truth of the interdependence and organic connexion of all forms of social life, we may come to a truer view of the relation of the State and Society. In this connexion there may be said to be two sets of problems, one concerning the relation of the State to other kinds of associations, the other concerned with the relation of men in different States to one another. I shall only concern myself, and that briefly, with the second.

There is a sense in which all men form one society in that they are all to some extent interdependent and all to some extent recognize that



interdependence and its claims. But it is important to realize that Society admits of degrees. We in this country may be affected by and may affect the inhabitants of Patagonia, and we and they may recognize a certain common bond of obligation to secure that our mutual obligations are regulated by justice in that we are all men. But we cannot begin to compare that interdependence with that which we in this country have with one another, or that common bond with the bond which we in virtue of close and long-enduring interdependence have with one another as fellow countrymen. If political organization is essential to regulate and inform with mind men's unorganized social relations, and if its own strength and power depend on men's sociableness and their power of working together for a common end, then it must conform to the differing need for regulation caused by the very different degrees of relatedness between them and to their very different powers of working together. If that be so, it is easy to see that the theory that would cut Society up into separate exclusive States and the theory that would do away with all difference between States are alike far too simple for the facts. The least reflection on the nature of the British Empire will convince us of that. The Empire is an organization which has since the American War of Independence enjoyed the rare privilege of being based on a genuine will to co-operate according to the relevant political facts. What is the result? Is it a single State or a collection of

States? Surely neither of these two things. At least the Empire as a whole is not a State in the sense in which this country or Canada or Australia are States, and yet it is not just a collection of States. As it has developed, its component parts have developed, each into a nation with a complex organization of its own. That has only served to strengthen but not to elaborate the political organization of the whole. When, therefore, the German theory of the State whose existence is a good in itself, and whose essence is war, is once for all destroyed, and we set ourselves down to make political organization help and not destroy Society, let us realize the complexity of the problem and see that political organization may and must vary with the nature of the Society to which it is applied.

With one of the elements in the problem we are familiar. The strength and effectiveness of a political organization depend on the readiness of its members for co-operation and mutual sacrifice. Such readiness is partly produced but also presupposed by political organization. It depends on the many bonds that unite men together, a common language and culture, or pride in a common history. If the political organization cuts across that will to co-operate which is founded on these social bonds, its stability and effectiveness are endangered. With the problem arising from these facts we are, I say, familiar. It is the problem of nationality. Its many complications I do not propose to discuss. I am

more anxious to point out that it constitutes only one element in the problem.

In any society political organization is necessary because common action is necessary to repair the disorganization caused by the fact that men act independently and yet affect one another by such action. The complexity and elaboration of political organization needed in any sphere will, therefore, depend on the complexity of men's interrelatedness. But the readiness to co-operate and the need for such co-operation need not and often do not coincide.

That this is so is especially due to the peculiar nature of economic relations which constitute so much of men's interrelatedness in the modern world.

It is ordinarily the case that the more men are dependent on one another the more are they prepared to act together for a common purpose. But in economic relations men can act together without having a real common purpose. For their common purpose is the production of exchange value, and that is only a means by which each individual can fulfil his own purposes. The consequence is that economic relations are possible between men who have almost nothing in common and that they have spread, and are spreading, all over the world far faster than political organization can follow them. This, one of the outstanding facts of modern civilization, had been acclaimed before the war as certain in the future to make war impossible, once men had



shaken off the obsession of the State. Such hopefulness rested on a mistaken view of the nature of economic relations. The increase of men's interconnectedness may mean only the increase of their opportunities for rivalry unless men's will to co-operate increases at the same time. The trouble is that the solidarity necessary for effective political action is a comparatively slow growth, and the extent to which it has been outstripped by economic organization constitutes the great danger of modern civilization. We have heard a great deal lately of our deplorable neglect of science. It is true that once we are at war, the nation's command over the mechanical sciences is an enormous asset, but that we are at war is largely due to the fact that the world's, and especially Germany's, knowledge of the mechanical sciences (and the world-wide economic organizations which that knowledge made possible) have grown without a corresponding increase in the understanding of politics, or in the will for political organization.

The political task of the future will then be dominated by this discrepancy between the need for political organization created by the growth of economic interconnectedness and men's capacity and will for it. The natural economic unit of government will often not coincide with the natural social or national unit, and some way will have to be found of reconciling the varying intensity of men's need for common political action with the varying intensity of their will to co-operate.



Instances of this discrepancy are not hard to find. They are as evident in local government as in international relations. The old organization of local government in this country rested roughly on the principle that neighbours had the same problems and also understood one another. The country was divided into local units, counties or boroughs or parishes, each of which had local feeling, more or less strong. The work to be done and the willingness to co-operate went together. The progress of mechanical invention is rapidly producing a new situation. On the one hand, there is a continual demand for new areas of regulation, water, drainage, electricity, tramway areas ; on the other hand, owing to the increase in the means of communication, men's interests are often outside the area in which they live. Residence is coming to mean less, and local patriotism suffers accordingly. The big towns indeed are real units of government with their own problems and civic patriotism to solve them, but beyond them are the suburban areas, neither town nor county, with no real local patriotism with which to solve their difficulties. The organization of local government has therefore to be constantly changing as new demands are made upon it, and the defects of much local government in England at the present day is that local patriotism has not been able to keep pace with these demands.

It seems a far cry from such parish politics to the problems of the future of Europe. Indeed,

the difficulties of the international situation are intensified a thousand-fold in that local is as nothing to national patriotism, and the sense of a common heritage in Europe hardly existent. Nevertheless, the problem which is produced by the discrepancy I have noticed is the same in principle in both local and international affairs. Obvious instances are the relation of Danzig to Poland and of Trieste to Austria. Danzig is nationally German but it is the economic outlet of Poland, as Trieste is nationally Italian but economically is bound up with the Slovenian and German country to the north.

If such problems are to be solved with any measure of success, we must constantly keep in mind two principles.

The first is that these discrepancies between patriotism or the feeling of nationality and the need for political co-operation are no reason for discarding or discouraging patriotism and national sentiment. That would be an excusable course only if the need for common action produced of itself the will for it. But that, as we have seen, it does not do. The mutual understanding and the readiness for mutual sacrifice which patriotism implies are a slow and precious growth, not to be lightly cast aside. Men sometimes write as though devotion to an organization like the modern State were an obsession or a degraded tribal instinct instead of seeing what a magnificent achievement it is. We must work through the State, not against it.

The second principle to be remembered is that the State as it has existed in the past is not the only possible form of political organization. Some of the problems which are vexing Europe will never be solved by the men whose remedy is annexation or dismemberment, carve they their political boundaries never so wisely, any more than they will be solved by those who preach peace but will not pluck out the roots of discord. The need for political organization is no more uniform than the will to it, and the political organization which will solve the difficulties of Europe will not be uniform either. The difficulties which confront us in politics may seem insurmountable, but we may take heart by reflecting that very similar difficulties are already being surmounted in the formation of the British Empire. 'Peace', says William Penn, 'is maintained by justice, which is a fruit of government, as government is from society, and society from consent.'

## V

# EGOISM, PERSONAL AND NATIONAL

BY H. RASHDALL

IN one of the well-intentioned but not very wise sermons which it has been my lot to listen to during the last year and a half it was suggested that the real explanation of the war was to be found in the fact that the Germans put Reason above Religion. The implication was that national aggressiveness, the breaking of treaties, the horrors of Louvain, were all things approved by Reason, though condemned by Religion. Reason, it was suggested, was essentially immoral or at all events non-moral, anti-religious or at all events non-religious, while Religion was essentially irrational or at all events non-rational. Religion and Reason apparently say contradictory things. Religion says 'Love your enemies, keep your treaties, be humane'. Reason, we were led to suppose, says 'Hate your enemies and perhaps your friends; break your treaties; be brutal, callous, and cruel'. And yet the odd thing was that the preacher would have had not a moment's hesitation in admitting that in these contradictions Religion was right and Reason was wrong. What Religion said was true, what Reason said was



false. How Religion can be true while it contradicts what it is rational to believe, and how Reason can be rational when it asserts what is false—these are mysteries which may perhaps be explained in the Theological College to which the preacher owed his clerical education, but are not easily intelligible to one who was brought up in what I understand is now regarded by some as the obsolete and very ‘Victorian’ creed that Conscience is the same thing as Reason, and that Conscience is the voice of God.

I dare say your first feeling may be that it is not worth while to notice such muddle-headed utterances as these. But, after all, much the same kind of assumption—somewhat less naïvely and childishly expressed—seems to underlie a good deal of recent theologizing and philosophizing on the part of more important thinkers. There are a good many systems and tendencies in the air according to which Logic seems to be treated as a Science which, though intellectually unimpeachable, necessarily leads to error, and truth as something which is to be attained by any and every faculty or activity of the human mind except the old-fashioned and now discredited process of thinking. It would be quite beside the purpose of this lecture if I were to undertake to investigate any of these wider speculative questions. But there is one form of the fashionable Irrationalism which I do wish briefly to investigate this afternoon. What the preacher meant was at bottom that selfishness was rational

but wrong, and unselfishness right but non-rational. It is not so many years since a book written on these lines created an immense sensation, and was welcomed by bishops and orthodox divines as a valuable contribution to Christian Apologetics. I refer to Mr. Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution*. In some ways I should not deny the value of Mr. Kidd's interesting book. But what I am concerned with now is his assumption that selfish conduct is the only rational conduct. I have no time now to examine the various theories of Morality which deny the rational or intellectual character of the ideas of 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'evil' altogether, and endeavour to reduce what we usually speak of as 'moral judgements' to some kind or other of emotion. I must content myself with pointing out that no ethical system which does not make Morality the work of Reason can find any place for the idea of Duty—as that idea has usually been understood by Christians, and not by Christians only. If Morality is not dictated to us by Reason, but by emotion or some other non-rational part of our nature, it is clear that there can be no such thing as an absolutely binding Moral Law. Different people have different emotions, and one sort of emotion is as right as another. If all that is meant by an act being morally approved is that it excites a certain kind of emotion in certain breasts, it is an undoubted fact that there are human beings in whom cruelty does excite this emotion,

and upon that hypothesis they would be just as right as those in whom the horrors of Louvain and Aerschott excite strong feelings of disapprobation. Only if Morality is the product of Reason or Intellect, only if it comes to us from the same part of our nature which assures us that two and two make four, or that the law of gravitation is true, or that the Norman conquest really happened, can we talk of a universally binding Morality which is true for all men at all times and in all circumstances, however many individuals there may be who affect to think, or even do sincerely think, otherwise. Only Reason can give us that idea of objective validity which the unsophisticated moral consciousness demands. But I must not linger on these wider issues. I must for the moment assume that you will agree with the great majority of mankind (whether among the thinkers or among ordinary common-sense persons) that there is such a thing as an objective or rational Morality, that there is such a thing as reasonable conduct, and that the main question which the Moralist has to consider is 'What kind of conduct is reasonable?'

It is suggested, as we have seen, in some quarters, that Egoism is the rational ideal of life. There are philosophers who have systematically maintained that that is so. In so far as it is possible to discover any definite, intelligible theory of Ethics in the rhapsodies of Nietzsche, his doctrine may be said to be precisely this—that Egoism is rational, Altruism essentially



irrational. Of course there are in his chameleon-like philosophizing (or should I say dogmatizing?) a good many other doctrines quite inconsistent with this: men of genius are not to be tied down by the prosaic rules of mere consistency. Often he writes as if there were no such thing as right and wrong in conduct, as if the words good and evil were either absolutely *voces nihili*—words without meaning, or as if they were simply equivalent to ‘ what I happen to like ’ and ‘ what I happen to dislike ’. At times he writes as if—whether in an individual, or in a nation, or in a theory of Ethics—to prevail were not merely a proof that the individual, or nation, or theory was right, but were all that can be meant by calling it right. Such a mode of thinking it would take a long inquiry to deal with effectively, and on such an inquiry I do not propose to enter this afternoon. But at other times he writes as if he quite recognized the existence or validity of these categories—right and wrong, good and evil, noble and ignoble: only he applies the terms to different kinds of conduct from those to which they have commonly been applied. He is, in truth, very often as dogmatic, as positive, as ethical, as the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount, or the philosopher of Königsberg; only wherever the old authorities say ‘ thou shalt ’ Nietzsche inserts a ‘ not ’, and where they say ‘ thou shalt not ’ Nietzsche deletes the ‘ not ’. The Ethic of Nietzsche is practically the Sermon on the Mount inverted. I know there



are attempts to explain away this side of Nietzsche's teaching ; but I for one believe that, like other writers, he is best understood by assuming that he really means what he says. Pity, sympathy, philanthropy, are his bugbears—at least for the Superman. To that sublime being, at least, he says : “ For your neighbour ” is the virtue only of petty people ; they have neither the right nor the power for your self-seeking.’

‘ Where your entire love is, namely, with your child, there is also your entire virtue ! Your work, your will, is *your* neighbour ; let no false values impose upon you.’ (Note the expression ‘ false values ’ : Nietzsche assumes that statements about value do admit of being true or false.)

‘ Ye shall love peace as the means to new wars, and the short peace more than the long.’

‘ Ye say it is the good cause which halloweth even war ? I say unto you : it is the good war which halloweth every cause.’

‘ Break up, I pray you, the good and the just.’

‘ Selfishness is worth as much physiologically as the man is worth physiologically who has it.’

And so on.

Such utterances as these leave nothing to be desired in their claim to objective validity. Nietzsche does, after all, appeal to Reason. He does passionately believe that he is right, and that if any one differs from him, that other person is wrong—wrong intellectually, not merely wrong because this or that person dislikes his moral

ideals. Nietzsche's good man—the bad man of commonplace Morality—is the only wise man. The good man of the common ideal is a fool. Nietzsche's Moralism or Immoralism is passionate ; it is full of emotion, full of intense likings and dislikings, but he evidently does not mean that his ethical beliefs are merely *his* emotions, and that he hates and despises those who have other and opposite emotions. He thinks they are wrong : they are not merely despised by him : they are justly despised : they must be despised by any rightly constituted mind. If he sometimes talks about two moralities—a lower Morality which is only adapted for the needs of the contemptible many, and a higher Morality which must be the prerogative of the select few,—he does not doubt that the Morality of the few really is the higher. This inexpugnable belief in an objective right and wrong, breaking through all sorts of attempts to explain Morality in a naturalistic and subjective manner, is deeply instructive. And, in so far as Nietzsche does thus appeal to an objective Reason in defence of his inversion of all ordinary Ethics, it becomes possible to argue with him, to ask whether his position is intellectually tenable, internally coherent and self-consistent? Reason, it is admitted, must be self-consistent. If Morality is rational, Morality must be self-consistent. I proceed to ask, then, 'Is it true that Egoism is essentially reasonable, however much on other grounds we may like or dislike it?'

By Egoism I mean the creed which says 'It

is reasonable for each individual to promote his own good and nothing else'. This opinion does not necessarily imply any particular view as to what the true good consists in. By the most famous and typical Egoists—Hobbes, Bentham, and their followers, and practically by Nietzsche in some of his moods (though elsewhere that doctrine is violently combated), the good is identified with pleasure; but that is not necessary to Egoism: there are not a few very anti-hedonistic writers, men who would scorn the idea that pleasure is the only good, who advocate a quite lofty and edifying Morality, but who are nevertheless Egoists: they hold that the individual should pursue his own good, though they may make that good consist in Virtue, Self-realization, Culture, or some combination of these with or without pleasure. But with this question we are not now concerned. Our question is 'Is Egoism in any form reasonable?'

What do we mean by saying that a thing is good? I cannot give you a definition of 'good' any more than I can define what I mean by quantity or cause, or equal or unequal, or true or false, or any other ultimate concept of the human mind. I cannot tell you what it means in terms which do not imply the same notion, or which would be intelligible to people who have not got that notion already in their minds. But I can perhaps tell you in an indirect way what I mean, what we all mean, by it; and at all events I can tell you what we do not mean by it. I do



not mean, none of us mean (except when defending some theory), by calling a thing good merely that you or I desire it or like it. If that were all, it would be absurd to say 'You are right and rational when you pursue your own good, wrong and irrational when you pursue somebody else's'. And the Egoist, as we have seen, does say that. He means then by 'good' something which may *reasonably* be pursued, something which *ought* to be pursued, something the pursuit of which every rightly constituted mind will approve. If then my good is something intrinsically valuable or worthy of pursuit, something the pursuit of which Reason must approve, it must be right and reasonable for other people to pursue it too. From the point of view of Reason, it cannot make any difference who the agent is ; conduct directed towards the promotion of the truly good must always be approved, no matter whose conduct it is. When, therefore, I say 'This happiness, or well-being, or whatever it is, of mine is the sole true object of pursuit for me—that and nothing else', I must imply that it is right and reasonable for my neighbour also to pursue that same good. And it cannot be really right and reasonable for me to say that my good is the only good for my neighbour to pursue unless this good of mine is *the only good in the world*. If I am right in saying that my good should be for me the only object of pursuit, that is what I must mean. And therefore my neighbour also, and all mankind, are bound to pursue my good and nothing else.



And yet, if I am an Egoist, I turn round to my neighbour and say to him 'It is right and reasonable for you to pursue your own good and nothing else'. So that I am in the position of saying 'My good is the only good in the world, and your good is the only good in the world'. Two different things are each of them the only good in the world. Can there be a more absolute and indefensible contradiction? The voice which thus contradicts itself cannot be the voice of Reason. The very same principle which justifies me in asserting that my virtue or self-culture or pleasure, whatever thing or combination of things it be which I call good for myself, is a proper object of pursuit for me, compels me to maintain that the same amount of virtue, or pleasure, or whatever it is, in you, must be equally valuable, and that it must be equally my duty to pursue that good of yours—and so on with anybody's good so far as it is really good. And thus I am driven to the conclusion that there can be no other rational end of conduct except universal good. *The* good is the universal good: my good can only be good at all in so far as it is part of the universal good. My good *is* a part of that universal good, just as important as the like good of anybody else. Unlimited Altruism is, indeed, as irrational as unlimited Egoism: I ought to promote my own good. But none the less that good ought to give way when it collides with the greater good of others. More good must always be more valuable than less good: the good of all

must be more valuable than the like good of one. The right course of conduct for me must be to do that which will promote the greatest good on the whole ; and, since it is clear that each individual has an equal right to have this good promoted, I ought also to promote (so far as I can) the justest and most equal distribution of this good among all persons who can be affected by my conduct.

I need hardly say that there is nothing new or original in this doctrine. It has been insisted upon over and over again by old English writers such as Cumberland and Clarke, by Kant, by German critics of Nietzsche such as von Hartmann<sup>1</sup>—in fact by most of the rationalistic Moralists of all ages ; but no one has ever brought out the inherent logical contradictions and inconsistencies involved in Egoism with quite the same clearness and consistency as Mr. G. A. Moore, of Trinity College, Cambridge. If any one wants a further development of the argument, I must refer him to that writer's extremely brilliant work, *Principia Ethica*.

So much for personal Egoism. But does Egoism become any more reasonable when for the individual there is substituted 'The State' ? Writers like Treitschke and his more popular prophet Bernhardi have no desire to defend Egoism as a rule of personal conduct. The more

<sup>1</sup> See his scathing criticism upon Nietzsche and Max Stirner (from whom he accuses Nietzsche of having plagiarized) in his *Ethische Studien*.

militarist a writer may be, the more is he likely to appreciate the fact that success in war demands a maximum subordination of the individual to the community. The typically Prussian spirit has no desire to undermine the sense of duty, or even that ideal of duty which expresses itself in the word self-sacrifice, however much upon occasion its exponents may dally with certain evolutionary theories about Ethics which must logically have that effect. Treitschke, it seems, professed a special devotion to the Kantian Categorical Imperative, though he repudiated the theological side of Christianity. The individual is to subordinate himself to the State; but the State, we are told, is not to subordinate itself to anything whatever. The principle of self-sacrifice, we are told, must rest upon the superiority of that to which the sacrifice is made. But the State, Bernhardi declares, cannot subordinate itself to anything higher, because there is nothing higher than the State. There is nothing higher than the State! What State? The German is to treat the German State as the highest thing in the world. But Bernhardi and his friends would be full of contempt for an Englishman who did not treat Great Britain as the highest thing in the world. And, though a contempt for small States is part of the Prussian programme, I do not suppose Bernhardi would theoretically disapprove of Belgians treating even the Belgian State as having the supreme claim upon their allegiance. But can there be two or



more highest things in the world? Surely this nationalistic Egoism is open to exactly the same charge of logical incoherence as personal Egoism. The very same principle which asserts the intrinsic value of the State must lead to a recognition of the superior importance of all States. If the State is a high and holy thing, Humanity—or at least that part of Humanity which is organized into civilized States—must be a higher and a holier. I know that there are passages in Treitschke in which it is grudgingly admitted that the ultimate end is the education of the whole human race, but practically, in his political programme and his political ethics, this consideration does not enter; and in his more popular exponents this perfunctory concession to the claims of sanity is explicitly abandoned.

No doubt it might be possible to rest the defence of German aggressiveness upon the superior intrinsic value of Germany and its civilization to the world. Germany might be treated as the Super-nation: whatever promotes the supremacy and ascendancy of Germany, of German rule and German culture, must necessarily be for the eventual good of the human race. For those who have no appreciation of Liberty in any of the numerous senses in which Liberty is valued by Englishmen, this is of course a possible position. But it will be observed that this is not the doctrine which we are examining. The doctrine is not that Germany is justified in asserting itself, in extending its own power and culture



and the rest of it, because and in so far as it is in the interest of other nations that she should do so. It is not even the contention that, being of so great intrinsic value, Germany should count for more than other nations, and that the claims of other nations ought to be subordinated to those of Germany. The doctrine is that Germany is justified in ignoring other nations altogether, in treating them not as ends but as means, as Aristotle thought slaves ought to be treated—that is, as means to the life and well-being of the superior people who alone really matter. That Germany actually possesses this gigantic and incommensurable superiority is an assertion hardly made by any serious German. Germans might rule the other nations better than they can rule themselves; but it will hardly be seriously contended by an historian like Treitschke that our incapacity for governing either ourselves or other nations is so signal that such authority should be taken from us altogether. Germans will even admit upon occasion that politically they are a backward people. German traders may serve the world better than British traders; but it is not denied that we are capable of conducting trade sufficiently well to be of use to ourselves and to the world. British culture may be a poor thing compared with German culture; but the German admirers of Shakespeare and Newton and Darwin can hardly propose to abolish the English language and to plant German schools and universities in place of English all over the

world on the ground that our culture is worth absolutely nothing at all. Proposals to Germanize the world in the interests of the world must be dealt with on their own basis: what I am protesting against now is the irrationality and internal contradiction involved in the doctrine that Germany or any other nation is justified in making its own good the only rule for its internal or external policy. The subordination of one nation's interests to those of the whole world is as manifest a dictate of Reason as the individual's duty to subordinate himself and his interests to the welfare of his particular State.<sup>1</sup>

In speaking of 'good' or 'welfare' I have not discussed what is the nature of this *good* which we seek for all mankind—this good to which each and every State must be treated as

<sup>1</sup> It is well to notice any indication that there are still in Germany any tendencies which revolt against the National Egoism here criticized. I may therefore refer to an article by Professor Ernst Troeltsch in *Die Neue Rundschau* (February, 1916). The principles laid down in that article as to the rights and duties of nations leave little to be desired, except that there is no recognition of any human right outside the circle of civilized European States. The astonishing thing is that a man of Professor Troeltsch's undoubted sincerity and independence should really accept his Government's assurances as to the causes which led to the war and the perfect humanity with which it has been conducted. The fact is a more significant illustration than any extravagance of the Bernhardi tribe of the length to which that idolatry of the State against which Professor Troeltsch himself energetically protests is in practice carried by most German theological and other professors.

a means. I have not discussed that question ; and I have not time here to do more than just remind you once more that the good need not necessarily be pleasure. In my opinion the end is not simply pleasure, though I am not at all ashamed (after the manner of some philosophers) of including pleasure as an element, and a very important element, in human good. Goodness—the disposition to promote the good, a certain attitude of the will, a certain type of character—is itself a part of human good and the highest part ; and an element in it, too, is knowledge or ‘culture’ (if that much abused term may still be allowed to stand for something decent)—the enjoyment of truth and of beauty. I must be content to say these things dogmatically now ; and, after all, the nature of the true good must be determined for each of us by his judgements of value, judgements which are direct, intuitive, immediate, if you like, *a priori*. For the present I must be content to assume that most of you will accept the view of the ultimate good of human life which I have suggested to you, or something not very unlike it. But I should like just to point out the additional difficulties in which the defenders of German State-worship sometimes involve themselves by the nature of the end which they propose to themselves. Their favourite language about ‘power’ or ‘domination’ (*Macht*) being of the essence of the State, would naturally seem to imply that ‘domination’ is regarded as an end in itself. I will not



insist on the childishness of such an ideal—the naughty child's ideal of smashing things just for the sake of smashing them. But it may be worth while to point out the contradiction involved in making the ruling of others without their consent into the chief end of life. It is an end which cannot be universalized. If all nations were to rule others without their consent, where would the subjects be? But to do him justice, Treitschke (I am not so sure about his inferior henchmen) disclaims this absurdity. He admits that power must be directed towards an end. But what is that end? Treitschke tells us that it is to produce a certain type of character. And if the contradiction of Egoism is to be avoided, it must be a certain type of character for all the world—not in Germans only.<sup>1</sup> What is this type? What is the kind of life which the domination is to make possible?

To include political liberty in the same end would involve a still grosser contradiction than any we have examined; but as a rule liberty does not form a prominent element in the German

<sup>1</sup> There is this element of truth in the idea that (as Aristotle held) 'it is a noble thing to politize' or take part in government, but this can only enter into the ideal if it is extended at least to all members of a community who are capable of taking part in its government with advantage to that community. The government of a nation without its consent can only be justified on condition (1) that it is for the nation's good in the present, and (2) that the government is so conducted as to constitute an education for future participation in its own government.



ideal of life. They do, however, include 'Culture' in their ideal, and what a notion of Culture is implied in the idea that it is something which can be propagated by the sword—continuously and permanently pressed upon an unwilling community at the point of the sword! I do not deny that up to a certain point the thing is possible. A conquered people might be driven at the point of the bayonet to Germanized schools and universities, and a good deal of Science and Literature and History might be taught in this way. But you cannot have the highest and best kind even of intellectual culture without a measure of liberty. Even at home German culture has been deeply poisoned by the absence of political liberty—in spite of all the encouragement given to speculative theories, wise or unwise, sober or the reverse. There cannot be real intellectual liberty in a country wherein a man cannot be a professor, an officer, or a State official, if he is a Social Democrat (that is the acknowledged doctrine), and in which a Theologian, though he may deny the divinity of Christ, is practically forbidden to deny the divinity of the Emperor. Official and professorial Germany does not value personal or political liberty: it does profess to value intellectual liberty. And yet it is a delusion to suppose that you can have a full measure of the one without some measure of the other.

And now I must return to my main point. It follows from the line of thought through which I have been endeavouring to lead you that the

policy of each nation ought to be governed by a regard to the true welfare of the world, not by an exclusive regard to its own interests. I have no doubt that there are some to whom such an idea will seem extravagant. I may be reminded of those famous words of Canning :

‘ I hope that my heart beats as high for the general interests of humanity. I hope that I have as friendly a disposition towards other nations of the earth as any one who vaunts his philanthropy most highly ; but I am contented to confess, that in the conduct of political affairs, the grand object of my contemplation is the interest of England.’<sup>1</sup>

Canning goes on to admit, indeed, that ‘ our *ultimate* object must be the peace of the world ’. But I am afraid there may be some who will be disposed to accept Canning’s doctrine without the qualification supplied by the context and the circumstances of the particular case. By such hearers I must be content to be regarded as a dreamer ; yet it may well be that the objection will only come from misunderstanding the doctrine which I am endeavouring to express : and to prevent such misunderstanding a word or two of admission or explanation may be desirable.

1. When one speaks of the duty of a nation, of the right policy for a statesman, one means what the nation would do if the majority of those who direct its power were completely just, right-minded, and intelligent. One has to recognize,

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Plymouth in 1823.

of course, that no country actually comes up to this ideal ; and a statesman whose own personal ideal may be perfectly correct has sometimes, when acting on behalf of his country, alone or in concert with allies, to put up with something less than the ideal. If he can manage it without sacrificing that national honour which every State has an interest in maintaining, I do not deny an American statesman may be justified in keeping out of a European war in defence of Right or Justice merely on the ground that he would not be supported in doing so by the public opinion of his own country.

2. Even in the interests of the world in general it is obviously desirable that nations should be slow to embrace the quarrels of other nations. That was the real meaning, I imagine, of Canning's doctrine. It is desirable that in normal circumstances each nation should look after its own interests, and that in the first instance it should be left to the nation injured to seek redress for its wrongs by its own exertions—just as even in private affairs it is often left to the wronged individual to put the law in motion. We may even say that in some cases it is better that some wrongs should be inflicted upon weak States than that every quarrel between a powerful State and its neighbours should be taken up by every nation that has sufficient interest in the public welfare to do so. We need not necessarily condemn the old policy of splendid isolation (when and where it is practicable) because, for



reasons with which we are all by this time familiar, it is becoming—at least as between European States—more and more impracticable for any nation that wishes to be secure to stand alone. We need not be afraid that to admit that the policy of a State ought to be determined ultimately—I should lay great stress upon the *ultimately*—by a regard for the interests of Humanity generally will necessarily involve a constant series of quixotic interferences with affairs which, according to ordinarily received ideas, do not concern us.

3. But there is another objection to the position I have taken up which to some minds may seem much more serious and fundamental. I have based the right and the duty of a State to make war solely upon the right and duty of each State to promote the true well-being of Humanity. Are we then, it may be objected, to say that the individual must form his own opinions as to the rightness of every war in which his country is engaged? And if he is not so satisfied, is he released from that duty, or even compelled to oppose his country and to refuse, at whatever cost to himself, to fight for her? A full discussion of this objection would involve a whole theory of the State. My answer must be brief and dogmatic. I should reply, 'Certainly not, for the very first requirement of the general good is that each individual should obey his own State'. And this requirement sets limits to the extent to which the individual can make the pursuit of



universal Good his immediate end. As a citizen, it is his duty to do all that in him lies to prevent his State entering into unjust wars ; but, when the legal authority has made its decision, and until it has altered its decision, it is his duty to support and do his utmost for his country—at least in all ways in which he is required to do so by law. I do not say that there are no exceptions to such a principle : undoubtedly there are, just as there are other circumstances in which it is a duty for the subject to rebel and to try to alter the government by force. I will not deny that there may have been moments at which a good French Protestant may have been justified in fighting for Protestantism and religious liberty against the country of his birth. But these are very rare and exceptional cases. *Prima facie* it is the duty of the citizen to abjure private judgment in such matters and to do his best for his country. And the ground of that duty is that such obedience is the first condition of social well-being for each State and for the community of States. He is not putting his country above Humanity when he acts upon this principle : he is serving Humanity by serving his country (even when his country may seem to him to be in the wrong), just as he is serving his country by obeying a law which he personally believes to be bad.

There is one other possible misunderstanding against which I should like to guard myself. I began by suggesting that to assume an anti-

thesis between Reason and Religion or Reason and Morality represents a lamentable confusion of thought. It is selfishness that is irrational: the due subordination of the individual to Society is essentially rational; and such subordination constitutes the fundamental principle of all Morality. The true end for each and every individual can only be universal good. But, though Morality is essentially rational, it is undoubtedly the fact that moral rules are not generally obeyed simply because they are rational. And, with regard to the more fundamental rules, we may say that they will never be sufficiently obeyed by masses of men until such an obedience becomes a kind of instinct; while the highest Morality of all is generally not only instinctive but passionate. This does not imply that there may not be a strong underlying sense of the reasonableness of the rule to which deference is paid, but that sense is in the majority inarticulate, unanalysed, not fully self-conscious. Very ordinary people of little education can see in a vague way the reasonableness of honesty, of not stealing or cheating, but most of them would write very bad essays on the theory of property. No rule of current Morality seems more rational upon reflection than that children should obey their parents, but hardly any children, and not many parents, ever deliberately reflect upon the reasons for it. The highest unselfishness is rational, and I believe that there is a dim underlying consciousness of its rationality even in those whose Morality

is most emotional and least reflective. Conscience is at bottom Reason, even in those who have never for one moment reflected that it is so. But the most unselfish persons are often—I will not say always—those who have least reflected on the rationality of unselfishness. In the same way Patriotism is essentially rational; but Patriotism does not attain its maximum development till it becomes an instinct, a passion, an enthusiasm. No community is in a healthy condition until every individual obeys the State from the same spontaneous and natural affection with which the best children obey the best parents.

It is quite right that all traditional or emotional moralities should be criticized, that they should at times be called upon to give an account of themselves at the bar of Reason, and sometimes that they should be modified in accordance with such rational criticism. And when we citizens of the British Empire sit down, as Bishop Butler has it, 'in a calm moment,' to consider this matter, I think we must admit that our Patriotism in the past has been by no means excessive, but somewhat deficient. I will not stay to ask how far a German, applying a similar test to the Patriotism of his own country, would not be compelled to admit that German Patriotism has recently been excessive, or at least misdirected—too materialistic, too unreflective, too much disposed to identify Country or State with the person of the ruler or with the bureaucratic machine. Certainly that is so when it is attempted,



in Bernhardi's fashion, to make an idol of the State, to set it up in the Temple of God, and in the place of Humanity. True Patriotism should always assume the form of a devotion to Right: there should always be a deep underlying consciousness not only of the rights but of the duties of one's country in the active service of Humanity, and of the fact that the individual's duties to the State are based upon this duty to a wider Humanity. And yet, after all, the Germans are right in thinking that Patriotism should be a sort of instinct. That our country has of late been somewhat deficient in this instinctive Patriotism, I think, cannot be questioned. Doubtless there has been plenty of conceit and self-complacency in the average Englishman's attitude towards foreigners: that is not the sort of Patriotism that is wanted. By Patriotism I mean the disposition to make serious sacrifices for the State. It has taken some time and some trouble to arouse the Patriotism of our people, though now that it has been roused, no nation can show a finer record of voluntary service than we can. And the Patriotism that has been awakened is, on the whole, of the right sort: indeed, the response to the call would not have been what it has had not the call of Patriotism in the present case coincided so obviously with the call of Humanity. That has appealed to the class of mind which has been more in the habit of thinking of the call of Humanity than of the call of Patriotism, which has not sufficiently seen the necessity of



the more restricted kind of loyalty as a means to the higher. The broken treaty, and still more the atrocities, have roused many whom appeals to abstract loyalty or to remote national interests would have left cold. But after all there is a minority: the number of those in whom conscientious objections are only a name for cowardice and indifference is, I fear, distressingly large.

The causes of a certain deficiency of the patriotic sense among some classes of Englishmen are easily explained: they lie deep in our national history and traditions: they are by no means all of them discreditable. In the past, through the accidents of our national history, public spirit has as often had to assert itself in the form of opposition to the government of the day as in active service of it. But whatever the cause, I think there is no doubt of the fact. And this must be altered in the future. In Germany Patriotism has been taught for generations—a somewhat blatant, narrow Patriotism, that takes little account of international Morality, but still there can be doubt about its strength. We must essay the more difficult task of teaching a higher, a more rational, a more humane and more Christian Patriotism. This teaching will not be chiefly intellectual: though we must look in part to education in the narrower sense—education of the intellectual and reflective order—to make thoughtful men of all classes understand why it is that loyalty to the State should be deeper, more unquestioning, more unlimited, than

the quite necessary and defensible loyalty to a class, a Trade Union, or a political party. Partly we must look to intellectual education, but much more to that training, cultivation, and discipline of the emotions and affections which is none the less a real and actual force in the moulding of social life because it is so difficult to analyse and define its nature and its *modus operandi*. I will not attempt to make definite suggestions as to the way in which this process of education is to be effected in the home and in the school, in the Church and in political life. These are problems on which I will leave you to think. But I am quite sure of its necessity. The State must bulk larger than it has hitherto done in the thoughts and the imaginations of many Englishmen. That is the only protection we have to look to in the future, not only against the foreign enemies who are by no means likely to love us the better when we have beaten them, but against the Syndicalism and other anarchic forces which threaten Society with dissolution from within. We need not all be Socialists to recognize that a generous respect for the State, a loyal submission to Authority, a trustful confidence in the Government (even when it is not precisely of our own political shade), are the only conditions upon which we can hope for a solution of the social difficulties which probably await us at the conclusion of the War. There are still a great many prominent and loud-voiced persons who have yet to learn that to be 'agin the

Government' is not always an indication of Patriotism.

And one word more in conclusion. I have spoken of the State. But what State is it to be? Great Britain or the British Empire? All history shows that there cannot safely be a divided loyalty. That is one of the great lessons which Mr. Curtis has taught us in the first instalment of that remarkable book which is appearing under the auspices of the Round Table group, *The Project of a Commonwealth*. The citizen must put one loyalty above all others. That the citizens of the Dominions do put their devotion to the British Empire above the narrower loyalty to their own communities has been magnificently demonstrated by the response which they have made to the call of the Mother Country in her hour of need. And this in spite of the fact that at the present moment they have no share in governing the Empire which they uphold. This cannot be so for ever. In some way or other it is obvious that the Dominions will have to take a full and a direct share both in the government of the Empire and in bearing its burdens. And a change of sentiment must follow the constitutional change. We, the inhabitants of these Islands, shall have to put our loyalty to the wider Britain above our loyalty to the smaller Britain. And one great advantage there will be in the change. It would be ridiculous to pretend that the interests even of this wider Britain will always and necessarily be identical with those of other nations.

But I do think we may say that there is far less danger of a collision between the claims of country and those of Humanity or international Right, when the country to which we are devoted is one which is composed of many races and inhabits distant regions of the earth's surface. Such an Empire is much less likely than a narrower one to be united in a war waged in the interest of a class, of a body of traders or bond-holders, of some narrow and unc cosmopolitan ideal. The very connecting link of such an Empire will be not so much the common origin of the dominant race as the principles of Justice and political freedom to which all its constituent elements are attached, and the maintenance of rights which are the common interest of Humanity. The ideal of the British Empire is one which will make it comparatively easy to harmonize duty to one particular State with that duty to Humanity which is the true basis of Patriotism itself.



## VI

# THE IDEA OF A GENERAL WILL

BY HILDA D. OAKELEY

THE experience of passing into one of the great tragic eras of history, and of passing into it out of an age of faith in knowledge as the safe assurance of progress, gives us a rare opportunity of escape from a fallacy which may be called the fallacy of the present. Like Bacon's Idol of the Crowd, to which every one must be subject because it results from the very structure of the human mind, this fallacy of the present is universal. Yet in every generation it has its own specific character determined by the whole of the conditions and atmosphere of that age. For each generation its 'now' is the moment of reality; every other moment must hang from this. Or rather there is no other; on this thin vanishing-point rests the whole stable structure of the past, the structure also of the future raised by the mind. The structures of the past seem stable, enshrined in monuments, records, conceptions which may be common to all. The present living moment is unstable, impossible to grasp except when no longer alive, and yet it is the support of all that vast edifice upon which our humanity depends.

The past, the future, are constructions, as the philosopher says; only this fleeting hour confused and obscure for reflection, has in it the memorial and key to the treasure-house of the past, the dawn and possibilities of the future, the creative impulse which is man's birthright. If this is so, it is intelligible that in proportion to the vividness of the sense of life in any generation, the past and future tend to be submerged. This proposition may seem questionable because it places the historic side by side with the prophetic mind, whereas to the practical philosopher it is natural to separate them sharply, and to suppose that a keen sense of the past interferes with the outlook to the future. 'This age is too historical,' said Nietzsche; 'there is no power in us to stand on the point of the present.' Thus it has appeared to many that in the great progressive moments of a nation's life its gaze has been fixed on the coming, and it has moved freely, because unweighted with the burden of consciousness of that which is behind. Such might have been the view of those who reflected on the basis of the most characteristic epoch of the nineteenth century, before Darwinism. Those whose youth was seized by the 'rigorous teaching' of such thinkers as John Stuart Mill, supposed themselves to belong to a world in which, for the first time in history, men had discovered the reasonable attitude to life, and the reasonable future to be aimed at for mankind. It may not be possible to convey the image of this state of mind to

a younger generation to which it has not come as the first discovery of the thinking life. For these also the present is the great reality, but it lacks, perhaps, that hard mid-day brilliance in relation to which all the past is at best twilight, or in the glare of which the past seems to wither up, and history to be a dream. The point, however, which it is intended to bring out is that for such a mental attitude the future suffers with the past, and is, in fact, equally unrealized. We do not see whither we are tending if we are endeavouring to build up, and think we can build up, the years and generations to come out of the works and ideas of to-day. We do not understand that the creative movement in which we are links does not pause longer at our own stage in the process than at any other point, to give it a supreme power and value, and that no thoughts we frame, or practical constructions we rear, will prevent the forces of the past from contributing to that future, which seems to be more within our power than theirs. And, in spite of a great devotion to historic study and a belief in itself as the most historic epoch, our own age appears to have remained, as it were, in that mental atmosphere which is not really historic in essence, or to have maintained that outlook to the future which resulted from the special form of nineteenth-century servitude to the fallacy of the present. The upheavals of life and thought through which we have been passing are surely bringing about a recovery of the historic sense. For, at least in



England, the passage from the habit of peace and profound belief in peace as the normal, because rational, condition of mankind to the habit of war on such a scale as to dominate all thoughts and radically modify practice over great spheres of action has been in its suddenness unexampled in history. The catastrophe of the Roman Empire, though a passage out of a peace wider than was ours, in so far as it comprised the whole civilized world, into a ruin and disorder greater (we may hope) than ours will be, cannot have involved so swift and profound a change of mental climate, at any one stage. For the thought of that era was not governed by a confidence in the possession of knowledge which should compel a halt on the road to such a catastrophe, even at the brink. The spirit I would recall pervades much sociological literature on the farther side of the chasm created by the war, especially, for example, Professor Hobhouse's *Development and Purpose*. This book represents in a typical way the nobler manner of conceiving the trend of progress as determined by knowledge, after more than two generations of reflection had chastened the speculation to which Darwinism gave birth. According to Professor Hobhouse there are several main lines of progress, but as the central line and standard he takes the advance of man's control over nature, through knowledge and the applications of science. This (from his standpoint) must be the true criterion, because with the growth of knowledge there is vitally connected



the development of the social mind. Both are signs or results of the presence of a spirit in the world working towards harmony. Rightly or wrongly, we could not now conceive the process as falling within these large and simple outlines.

We shall soon forget, for all the wealth of literature, philosophy, and historic record means little, or gives only a perception as of some object external to the mind, unless interpreted by a consciousness which finds itself in the movement of the past. How shall those who have faced the possibility of disaster to all they value most in civilization long retain a vital memory of the safe mental posture of the ' heirs of all the ages ', who accepted their heritage as the rightful due of the twentieth century, theirs axiomatically through evolution ? ' What did we dream ? What wake we to discover ? ' But the dream will fade and the discovery grow commonplace as something found out long ago. Those now living have had, however, a greater educational discipline in regard to the spirit of history than any former generation has enjoyed, and suffered. What the time-spirit has in general taken centuries to effect it has in our day performed in the short space of a few years. Even now this can be said; it will probably be said with still more force in a time rapidly approaching. Spiritual dramas, of which the personages have in earlier history been centuries or generations, have in our period been enacted by the years and months. Such are the experiences which, giving us a longer

perspective than is ordinarily given in a single life-epoch, should arouse the true sense of history, and conjure out of us, if any power can, the fallacy of the present. Thus, we realize that our era, instead of standing by itself in security and hope of increasing prosperity for mankind, is set in an age of instability, the nature of the next stage of development in important respects uncertain. Having known both experiences, we should be more capable of rising to a consciousness of the universal in history. It is because I believe this consciousness to be essential to the reality of a general will that I have approached the subject in this way.

It may make clearer what is intended by this aspect of the general will, if I venture upon an illustration. The crowd of persons waiting in Westminster, outside the Houses of Parliament, on the afternoon of August 4, 1914, had been drawn thither by a single thought which possessed every mind, however varied otherwise in interests, aims, and habits. In the nature of its influence this thought ranged from the pleasant excitement which did not destroy a Bank Holiday mood, to the grave awe of the real student of history and politics, who realized that for his country one age might at that moment be drawing to a close and another beginning. Many, perhaps the majority, were waiting expectantly as for news of a decision with which they did not essentially feel that their own wills had any concern. The last editions of evening papers as they were seized, containing,

each successive issue, a few more lines of Sir Edward Grey's speech, represented with every word a further step on the way to a catastrophe. This outcome—dreaded by all—was not willed by them, or not in any active sense, but hardly doubted or questioned as being inevitable. What was the significance of this 'inevitability' which had succeeded to the 'unthinkability' of a few days before? Was it not dependent on the consciousness, more or less vague, that the result must follow in order that national character should express itself truly in the circumstances before it? But accurately to interpret this consciousness, it would hardly be possible to say that all or most were actively aware of this character as their own. Granted that the tenor of the argument was accepted by all, or the great majority, in the recognition that the logic of a people's history could only yield this conclusion, did each individual feel his own moral reason to be part of that national reason which constituted the major premiss? According to the degree in which this feeling exists in the members of a community, when decisions affecting all are made, and the extent to which it is shared, whether or not accompanied by vivid awareness on the part of all who possess it, can a general will be said actually to exist. Definite awareness in all does not seem essential, if all have that sense of satisfaction with the decision which is only present when the bond, or principle, whatever it is, which is the basis of the community involves that this particular decision shall be made.



Now this bond or principle is the universal, and to its constitution the whole of the previous history of the national will must have contributed, where such a will exists. The fact that all the people assembled in Westminster on August 4, 1914, were not clearly conscious of the activity of a general will manifesting itself in the forces gathering to a decision, was not merely, or even mainly, due to the imperfections of constitutional machinery, which may have hindered many—men as well as women—from the conviction that every act of the constitutional body was an act they had willed through their representatives. It was also, and more, due to the fact that most of us live unhistorically or without realization of that spirit which from generation to generation creates the history of any people that has a real history. It is this which determines the great acts of the general will, and whether or not we appear to have a part in constitution, laws, and administrative decrees, we cannot avoid contributing to its process, which flows through and over these—that is, if we belong to a nation truly so called.

What, then, is the relation of the general will to the national consciousness, or the spirit which has developed through history? By the general will I understand the will of a people directed towards those ends for which it acts as a whole, whether or not we conceive with the transcendentalist that these acts express some spirit or reality which is more than the aggregate of all the indi-



vidual wills constituting the whole. For Rousseau the general will was the social being or purpose of the State. It creates a society taking up into itself all the several intentions of the individual wills to form an order and system which is good for the individual because it is for the common good. Its content is political. It does not appear that a will thus conceived is essentially organic to the specific character of the community which wills, determined in quality by its traditions, habits of mind, ideals, culture. The tendency of eighteenth-century enlightenment was not in harmony with the notion of strongly marked national characters with diverse forms of will. Moreover, as the idea passed over into the possession of Kantian and Hegelian thought, it became somewhat transmuted by the idealistic logic at work upon it, the general will appearing in one light as the expression or application of the universal of reason. It is because the true will is the will of a rational being that man obeys the law of reason in the State, freely, since it is a law in the laying down of which his own will ideally has a share. Not that in the Hegelian view the State is an abstraction, for it gathers up into itself the higher life of the community. As Dr. Bosanquet expressed it in his lecture on 'Patriotism in the Perfect State' in last year's series on the International Crisis:

'Hegel means by the State not the machinery of government, but all that fulfils in the actual community the individual's mind and will.' Even

‘ the particular form of sentiment and volition which his nation has so far worked out for itself, and in which the private person finds the substance of his own mind and what unites him with others ’, is to be seen by him in the State. The question which was dealt with by Dr. Bosanquet, in his usual masterly way, how the lofty Hegelian conception has degenerated into such conceptions of the State as are apparently characteristic of present-day German thought, or at least the thinking which is nearest to action, I venture to pursue, from a rather different standpoint. It may be that, in spite of the intention of Hegel and his followers to construct for thought a State which was to be the stable image and forceful idea of a living national spirit, the ideal had little power over the political thinking of nations, and less over their practical movements, because it did not spring out of the practical genius of the people from whose philosophy it arose. A theory of the State, to have the practical value which is its justification and to be truly applicable as guide in national conduct, must have had its birth in the thought which is a part of practice, and grows together with practice. For if it originate in the purely theoretic activity, if at least it is there formed and developed, then when brought into the practical arena it is liable to appear in servitude to the will and passions which have become strong without it. What, then, we have to seek is the secret and sufficient ground of a general will so completely expressive of national character that

the people shall remain true to it, recognizing in it the real core of all the multiform wills which are its components, an actual power as well as an ideal spirit. This will, in its universal character, gathers up into itself, so to speak, all that is most real in every motive of the individual citizen for work which has a quality of service, or a bearing on the general good. It has nothing in common with the instinct described by the social psychologist as the herd-instinct, of which Professor Gilbert Murray gave so brilliant an exposition in last year's course, though this instinct may sometimes seem to reflect it. The latter, which is due to the common emotion or passion, liable to seize hold of masses and groups of men and women, under certain conditions of excitement, is biologically explained. The behaviour of the crowd, as of the individual, can, it is argued, be made intelligible as due to characteristics which have persisted on account of needs of life. They have contributed on the whole to the survival of the group. The herd-instinct is 'careful of the type and careless of the single life'. The existence of such an instinct, and the plausibility or even reasonableness of the explanation which accounts for it as having endured because favourable in the long run to the survival of the tribe, may be recognized as part of the truth. But if we wish to comprehend human history we must use the only key we have to that shadowy world, our own direct consciousness of the human spirit. Otherwise we shall wander round the monuments and



ruins of its haunted cities, as half-blind men unable to capture the elusive spirit which alone can give us sight. And it is surely impossible to observe the march of history in the light of our immediate knowledge of the grounds and nature of those sequences which are human action, without being driven to the conviction that there are powers and forces at work which resist all attempts at explanation by biological categories. For when these forces come to the forefront of consciousness, individual and general, the persistence of life in the individual, and even the nation, no longer counts for much, but only of life of a certain quality. Nature is no longer careful of the type, but cries that all types may go. Nature, in fact, in the limited sense of the poet's purpose, is not concerned with the values for which man and society, as always found in history, endure, and whose conservation requires a different law from hers, a law found in our experience as the will for the ideal. When this law comes into conflict with the law of nature so called, the latter must give way; individuals and types may go though most fitted for survival, but the value for whose sake they perished will persist.

'The irrational herd-contagion almost invariably acts on a much lower moral plane than the will of the individual,' observes Dr. Inge, in a recent essay.<sup>1</sup> This seems true if we add that it also acts on a lower moral plane than the will of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Faith and the War*, edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson. 'Hope Temporal and Eternal,' W. R. Inge.



community, which is the real force, of which we have either the germ or the distorted image—almost the mockery—in the herd-contagion. Paraphrasing Aristotle, it might be said that the herd-instinct comes into being for the sake of life: the general will, for the sake of good life. That the former is the shadow of a good thing, whether rudiments or corruption, according to the point of view taken, is evident from the strength and beauty of some of its manifestations even in the sub-human and lower human worlds, where loyalty, self-sacrifice, co-operation, are marks of that instinct which is also the scourge and destruction of life. So great is the power given by the universal, even in its lowest forms.

To return to the conception of the State as objective mind whose right and law express the general will of the community; this, when we come to it after rejection of the herd-instinct, might well seem to be the conception sought for.

It obviously demands an exalted political consciousness in the citizens. For the State must, if this idea of it is valid, express at every point in development the free movement of their will, so that there shall be no element in the constitution in regard to which any citizen shall feel that at his best he has not willed it. But that this conception—which, as already observed, grew out of the absolutist philosophy rather than the thinking, which inheres in the essential movement of the practical mind of man in history—is inadequate, appears from the extreme difficulty it encounters when

confronted with the second great question of practical application, or what may be called the applied philosophy of the State. The first question for such philosophy being the relation of the citizen to the law and constitution, the second is the relation of the State to other States, and in particular, whether war can ever be justified on the theory of the State which makes it a construction of reason. The State at war would seem to be a political monstrosity more intolerable to idealistic thought than it is, as a moral monstrosity, intolerable to Christian ethics. For whereas, in religious ethics, the State may, whilst remaining moral, prefer a lesser to a greater evil in its struggle with evil, in idealistic theory the State cannot logically relinquish its universal principle in its struggle to remain member of a rational universe, though all other members of its universe suffer the paradox. Logic at least admits of no compromise. It is a form of the difficulty met with everywhere in the attempt to make the ideals or values which determine human history, or the process of the practical spirit, issue from the logical movement of thought. The conception of freedom within the State, which is the keystone of the arch of the Hegelian State in its practical nature, also suffers, not perhaps in intrinsic nobility, but in practical value, from the close union between the idea of freedom of the will and that of freedom of intelligence in knowledge. Hence in actual application the conception tends to degenerate; not being drawn out of the reality of national development,

it becomes more and more a fiction. The growth of the fiction can hardly be stopped at any one point until it becomes sufficient, as minimum condition of freedom, to conceive the individual as having tacitly willed the order of his State, merely in finding himself there and continuing to enjoy or endure its system.

Treitschke's revived idea of the State as Power, having little relation with the Hegelian, occupies the ground which the latter could not occupy consistently, but only by going beyond itself—the ground of the relation between States—with a theory harmonious with the Prussian Imperial view of the duty and rights of the German State. If there is anything of the Hegelian State surviving in that of Treitschke, it comes in as an example of the theory which, too free from practice in its generating motive, is easy victim to a violent practical hunger for justification by theory, and after mutilation is dragged at the heels of practice. The Hegelian notion that the State includes all the spiritual elements of society is swept aside, and the State is declared by Treitschke to be most truly a State when at war (with its spiritual activities either in abeyance or treated as ministering to this alien end). For only when at war can the State exhibit its essence as Power. Nothing could be thinner than this abstraction of the essence of the State from the soul of the nation, which paradoxically leads to the destruction of the historic foundation on which it rests. This foundation must be the recrudescence of nationalism



in modern times—that great crux of the philosophy of history contrary to the forward-looking of eighteenth-century thought: that fact whose stupefying effect may be seen in the fall of the Hegelian State, even in its conceiver's brain, towards Prussianism. For a valid nationalism demands all possible spiritual characterization in a State. Power alone will not differentiate one State from another except in mass or quantity. All qualitative differences, all the values of a national soul, are gone from the State if it is Power alone, and with them the only justification for the separate personality of the nation. Those forces which have been termed the will to live and the will to Power are inherently incapable of becoming the basis of a will in any sense universal, but it is the will to Power which is most profoundly incapable of the quality of generality. A mass of individuals collected as a national group may be conceived or conceive themselves as inspired by a will to increase by force, at best the influence and sway of their type of spirit, their prevalent ideas and interpretation of life, at worst their command over the material resources of mankind. But such a will is devoid of the kind of worth necessary to generality. It has not as its basis that bond which unites individuals by drawing forth in them powers, thoughts, and emotions of which apart from this they would not be conscious. If they are held together it is because of a loyalty to the herd, the herd-instinct, in which the will to Power has, as such, no part.



For in this will there is the seed of disunion, its essence being particularistic. Thus, if the State is that kind of unity which stands for the national will, the most universal form of the practical activity within the community, its essence cannot be power. This theory can only have plausibility for a people which is devoid of the constitutional conditions necessary to the consciousness of freedom in the Hegelian sense, and lacks in its history the experience which makes possible the expression of a national genius in a national will. When M. Loisy observes<sup>1</sup> 'The German people has no soul and cannot understand that other nations have one', he means presumably that their soul, the spiritual element in the community, has nothing to do with the practical attitude of the State. The State *qua* State being soulless, has not a universal will, however terrific the impression of unity of action which can be conveyed to it by use and organization of the instinct of the herd. The herd-instinct is, in fact, best rationalized in the machinery of organization, whilst the general will can only be rational in freedom.

Now if the conception of the State as objective mind cannot consistently legitimate the development of the rich diversities of national wills as ends in themselves, for the preservation of which from destruction war may be justifiable, we have finally to ask if any basis can be found for a general will which can, as it were, pause on the ground of nationality, not being forced on by an inner

<sup>1</sup> *The War and Religion.*

dialectic, whether of reason or humanity, to unite with itself the wills of all other peoples, as one will, to the loss and disappearance of the values which live only in national personalities. In the answer to this question (already implied) I would proceed on the assumption that the principle of true progress is the increase of the valuable content of human life. This is the final standard or criterion; this it is which removes human activities from the obscure dream-world of savage life to the reality and light of civilization. If this be granted we may take as rightly permanent and enduring in human history all those forms of association or social order which develop a value of their own, a value not to be created in any other way. This conclusion, I think, emerges from several lines of reflection; and especially if we consider the unreality when brought face to face with the actual experience of the present, and of the past as interpreted by the present, of all attempts so to understand the universal principle in human activity, the principle of association, as to make of the State and its will transient forms, passing transmitters of value in the drama of progress, to vanish, as mankind grows beyond the rude infancy to which wars belong. It has been argued that where a people can be said truly to have a general will, this is the direct and inevitable outcome of its whole nature, formed by the sum-total of its historical work in spiritual and practical energy, and that such a will only belongs to the people which has freely expressed its national

personality in history. At the present moment, the theory that the State is but one form of association, having no higher value than that attaching to other forms, and rightly to be abandoned when it seems to have served its purpose in the discipline of history, naturally commends itself to some who despair of human evolution to higher stages, on existing lines. Thus Dr. Inge, in the essay referred to above, speaks of the notion of the State as the ultimate unit to which devotion is due as 'a false opinion' (in the Platonic sense) and absurd 'in a world which contains many political aggregates on the same level of civilization bound together by close similarity of religion, ethical ideas, and social customs', &c. Others return to the nineteenth-century hope in a humanitarianism which shall gradually obliterate national distinctions.

No other association, however, seems analogous or comparable to this of the State. Only this can be conceived to have a personality, which, whilst qualitatively different, equals or transcends in richness and possibility the personality of the individual, because it takes up into itself all the historic memories of a nation, that is an aggregate of people and of lesser societies whose supreme bond is rather the possession of common ideals than of common ancestry. For those persons whose characters and minds are formed in the best likeness of the race have put into the national tradition, to flow on with it for ever, their highest spiritual expression in art, literature, thought, and action, and this complete result cannot be in the case of



any other association. This alone amongst associations is not set at a lower level of reality than the individual personality, because of abstraction. As a striking illustration of the aid given by representative individuals to the preservation of a national personality might be taken the work of the Serbian sculptor Mestrovic. For here is a nation whose distinctive spirit might hardly have survived its national trials but for such ideal expressions of its special character. If any other association could acquire the same kind of value, a value that is not fixed but freely growing with the history of the association, it would be as a nation in worth. The conception of the general will worked out by the line of thought which began in Rousseau and was developed and enriched by German Transcendentalists and English Neo-Hegelians must be made to touch the mother-earth of history again and again, in order to acquire the strength through which it will be true to the law of progress and effectual in practice. Certainly the word personality is metaphorical as applied to a nation. Yet the whole which is a nation has the infinite possibility which belongs to the individual, because its very essence depends on the relations of persons generally rather than for some specific end, and its nature being free in essence is incapable of complete definition. Thus it would appear that the revival of nationalism in modern times, which seemed to many, even apart from the danger of war, reactionary, is not wholly so, though it is so in some of its manifestations.



Some irreplaceable value would be lost with the loss of the national idea, and the enthusiasm and strength of national movements is due to the struggle to maintain a thing of worth.

Accepting with the Idealists the idea of freedom as the root-idea of the will within the State, we may now inquire whether the semi-logical conception of the relation of the individual to the general will can be applied analogously to the relation of the individual to the historic will, or the universal will of the nation in history. If this is possible the will would be recognized, as on the one hand expressed now in the constitution, law, and social system, so on the other in the long process from past to present, and towards the future of a national development. Can the individual or the people as a whole be conceived as judging: 'This was as I should have willed. My true will coincides with that of my nation at every stage in which its history required a real affirmation of will'? Or, 'The national will, of which I now am conscious, and in which I share, must have so moved in such a crisis. And in what it will be in the future my will is concerned. Knowing the spirit of the present I know that it must complete the historic universal so far expressed'? This would be the ideal, and only the people which can so feel is free in every sense of the term. For we are not only members of a society now living, but of one that is in past and future, as the Greeks obscurely expressed in their notion of a Nemesis beyond the individual, for which, nevertheless, he has a

responsibility, since it works through persons and families in the race. Few nations have a history corresponding to this conception, but some have more or less approached it, and, as our own is alone known to us directly, we may perhaps, without national egoism, take it as an example.

In the treatise earlier quoted, M. Loisy observes with reference to the manifesto of British writers on the war, 'That this spirit of liberty which is requisite for all human development is a really living sentiment and ideal amongst English people, may be seen from examination of the British constitution, and administration of colonies. It is not, however, a complete programme, nor altogether a religion; it is part of a very old experience which a practical nation puts at the disposal of the human race.' This interpretation seems to emphasize the essential points—the single spirit, expressed alike in the constitution and the relation of the State with other societies (colonies), and the old experience which has been continuous, i.e. the constant action of a national will. The substance of a national spirit is laid bare, and of this the general will becomes the expression when required. Except at such moments it may be forgotten. In a period of great stress, when acts of the national will are called for frequently, or a sustained action, men rise to full consciousness of it, and then do thinkers and statesmen, soldiers and private citizens, all illustrate it in deeds and sayings. Every people which has any history at all has some

spirit, articulate or inarticulate, which is more or less universal in its members (i. e. belonging to each as one of many, not as merely individual); but few have the history and the constitution worked out creatively by the national purpose, without which this spirit cannot be vocal in a general will. And, as earlier pointed out, a people having many of the conditions of a true nationhood, but lacking a national will (as here understood), may become possessed of the delusion, false in philosophy and disastrous in practice, that the essence of the State is Power.

If, then, there is no true general will in Germany of the present, this is due not only to the lack of some indispensable democratic conditions, and the fatal policy in education which would transform that most spiritual instrument into a material force, degrading ideas into things to be absorbed instead of energies to liberate the soul. But it is also and chiefly due to the absence of the indispensable historic experience, the fact that Germany, as a whole at least, has not been a field for the great movements of the practical spirit in history. She has given much to general progress, through individuals, in the thoughts and work of her great men, but not as a nation, for her national will is not yet alive. This should be remembered when the war is past and to some nations their wrongs may seem unforgivable.

‘Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.’ With the true significance of this often misapplied saying in our minds, we may turn to the story of



the German peoples under the 'Holy Roman Empire', as told by Lord Bryce. The great ideas which float over the scene are not ideas which spring out of a national development as its essential accompaniment. They are brought in from foreign worlds of thought, by a few visionaries, or statesmen seeking some theory to justify the practice which promised extension of power, and the actual historic experience of the people remains unlighted by any universal idea or principle of development. If we turn from this history to present-day Germany, the course of events may suggest some such fatal destiny as Sophocles represents, inevitably working itself out in wrongs which seem to be the willing acts of individuals, whilst the problem of innocence or guilt remains nevertheless unsolved.

Whether the general will through which the practical spirit of England has been expressed will continue unchanged in essence, though changing with the living national movement, is a question on which to prophesy would be bold. When Pericles in the Funeral Oration invoked from the near past the spirit in philosophy, art, and heroic life which was the contribution of the Athenian people to progress, the actual crowd he addressed might seem comparable to that man who 'beholding his natural face in a glass, went on his way straightway forgetting what manner of man he was'. For the community was already tending to become a collection of persons all severally animated by the desire for power, no



longer by that transcendent will which in the strength of its universalism had caused the overthrow of the Persians. The general will, then, in the significance in which it has been taken in this lecture, may be lost by a people which has possessed it in a high measure. Yet if at the present moment we should examine the signs of the times, hard though they are to discern, there is, I think, at least one sign which may be taken as a good augury for the endurance of that kind of practical attitude which is shown in a common will. This is the recognition, so widely present, not in this country alone, of the enormous importance to the future of mankind of the efforts and decisions now made. The understanding of this point takes different forms. It appears in the insistence of individuals that sacrifices so great shall not have been in vain, but shall be as the dawn of a greater day for all humanity. Or it may be the determination of nations, that the war shall be concluded under such conditions as to have caused no utter loss of the hardly won spiritual gains of the last two or three thousand years. Individuals as individuals and as members of nations realize that those now living are trustees for civilization. That the law of self-sacrifice cannot rightly be applied to a people as a whole seems indisputable. A nation is not a person in this sense, and cannot offer itself for the salvation of other nations. But when we turn to the relation, not of one State to other States, but of one generation to those that follow, it is otherwise. For it seems that in history

something like a law may be discerned by which the people of one age suffer for the gain of the next. It is a truth which is symbolized in the process of nature universally. The will, then, of this, as of some other nations at the present time, may be said to be informed with the spirit of history. It gathers up, so to speak, into itself the wills of past generations, and, having its roots and motives largely in the past, has its power and effectiveness largely in the future.

To come back to the question asked towards the beginning of this lecture, the people who awaited the decision of the Government on the eve of war were capable of a general will in the valid sense, for history since that date has been such as only a will truly universal, derived from what I venture to term the transcendent element in national character, could have made it. But they were not fully conscious of such a will because the sense of national history and its universal principle working through their acts had not been active in recent times. The experiences of the last twenty months have done much to reawaken that dormant sense—a consciousness that our ‘noisy years are nothing’ indeed in the being of history, if we add them up as portions of time, but everything if we count them as vehicles of that thought and will which we are required by the past to convey to the future.







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